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THE
MORNING!

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Behold the Morning!

*The Imminent and Premillennial
Coming of Jesus Christ*

By

C. F. WIMBERLY, B. A.

*Author of "New Clothes for the Old Man," "The Cry
in the Night," "The Vulture's Claw," "The
Winepress," "Is the Devil a Myth," "The
Lost Legacy," "Precious Jewel," etc.*



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*To that part of the "Bride of Christ,"
who cherish the "Blessed Hope of
His Glorious Appearing," this volume
is lovingly dedicated by the Author*



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Preface

THE author is quite aware that sermons or Biblical studies dealing with the early expectancy of the Lord's Return are considered by many in this day a return to "Millerism" or a species of unwarranted interpretation of Scripture, while to the majority of professing Christians it is an unknown subject. Even seminaries, scholarly divines, and religious writers seemed to have been indifferent if not hostile to this great doctrine. Notwithstanding, the Old Testament is saturated with Second Coming prophecies; and in the New Testament there are three hundred and eighty-five statements and prophecies concerning "The Day," "That Day," "The Day of the Lord," "His Day," etc. His early return was the dominating appeal in the gospel of the Apostolic Church. The apocalyptic vision continued to be the brightest star in the firmament until supplanted by Rome's religious imperialism under Constantine, and completely smothered out under Hildebrand. The Anti-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers were as pronounced in this doctrine as St. Paul or St. John; and throughout the Dark Ages a residue of choice spirits held tenaciously to this "Blessed Hope," and many of them paid for this "Hope" in cruel martyrdom. But for a vague reference here and there it escaped the Reformation, as well as the modern Church. John

Wesley saw this truth, and frequently called attention to it; but he was so much absorbed in his great themes of Regeneration and Holiness—getting a lost Church redeemed—that he did not take the time to think it through. It is not enough to call the Second Coming of Christ a neglected doctrine—it is a *lost doctrine*.

The last five decades have been devoted to the deification of human institutions: learning, culture, physical betterment, etc. It has been man's day: church, college, statecraft, and literature have combined in sounding the applause, and placing the crown upon the brow of incomparable man. Inflated with self-conceit, and looking upon old truths, old hopes, old assurances, and old ideals with an air of contemptuous pity—man has presumed to discover the panacea of all human ills. Pulpit, platform, and magazine have sounded out, loud and long, discoveries which were sure to bring about world-wide regeneration. Let us look at some of the high-sounding names, embodying big ideas—juggled in the air by *big men*—all of which have received the Chautauqua-handkerchief salute on the twentieth century forum; here they are: Brotherhood, Federation, Coöperation, International, Fraternity, Interstate, Interdenominational, Union, Fellowship, Brotherhood of Man, Fatherhood of God, etc.

Now that the world is getting a lurid, tragic vision of the veneer of human society, that the boasted civilization of several millenniums is crumbling before a veritable hurricane of demonized passion and fury, modern philosophers and rainbow theologians stand appalled, as it were, in the presence of a cat-

aclysm such as never visited this planet before. Treaties, ententes, alliances, international law, governmental ethics, and human sympathy have all been sucked into a world-cyclone of savagery—as though such beneficent principles never existed.

Many have never been caught by the lure of man's improvisations; to them the present situation is no surprise. To have seen and felt that the brilliancy of modern light—producing such beautiful rainbows of promise—was so only because it shone against a dark cloud mobilizing in the background did not require prophetic insight, but only a surface conception of the unequivocal teachings of the Word and careful observation of human events in their prophetic relation each to the other. However, those who dared to interpret the Word of God literally—as it was being really and truly unfolded in the human arena—have been slandered as pessimists; but now—Truth will out. We are no longer dependent upon visions and spiritual revelation of Scripture, but we stand out in the broad noonday of handwriting on the walls of nations—nations that have forgotten God and ignored His laws.

What meaneth these things now coming to pass in the earth? is the baffling question, uttered and unexpressed, from hearts everywhere who have prided themselves with their *optimism*. They behold their beautiful superstructure being torn to shreds, and the *why* and the *how* of it all seems unfathomable. How is it possible for the cogitations of so much gray matter, given out in flaming rhetoric and grandiloquent oratory, that is now dissolving into thin air? The answer is obvious: the foundation was a false pre-

sumption; hence the superstructure impossible. With a false premise, the deductions and conclusions must be inevitably wrong.

These days can be none other than the "perilous times," "the beginnings of sorrows," the times that "try men's souls," "the Last Days." The Gentile probation draweth to an end; the shadows lengthen out as the world's light is departing. But thank God, we believe "with an unfaltering trust" in the early approach of that other Light—the Sun of Righteousness, the breeze from the rustling of whose wings will bring healing to the sin-sick nations. The prophet Zechariah said: "At evening there shall be light." Then the impact of this truth should cause us to exemplify the words of Paul in his letter to Titus: "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Like a sunburst, some ten years ago, this great truth came to us, and since then our sky-line is moved out and beyond—the horizon fades away into the eternities. It is the center and the circumference of the Gospel—yet so vast, so far beyond the reaches of human intellect that, with the telescope of faith, it is like standing in the presence of Mount Everest—majestic and towering and overwhelming in grandeur.

Ten years of careful study on such details as were available brings us scarcely to the rim of what His Coming will mean. However, such of its glorious revelations as lie within reach have given to this writer a new Bible, a new Gospel, and truly a new

Hope. From the first impressions we felt impelled to convey to others some of the things gathered out from the immensities all about ; but conscious of our inability to cope with a theme so great, and also keenly alive to an unsympathetic public, we have been restrained from making the attempt. But with a firm confidence that He would be pleased to have us take up this truth, once delivered to the saints, and give it out—though narrow as our scope of vision may be—we send this volume on its mission as a Voice crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.”

Franklin, Ky., January, 1916.

Acknowledgment

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PART I
The Ominous Forecast

BEHOLD THE MORNING!

“ There’s a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the Spring,
When our eyes shall see the beauty and the glory of the King ;
Weary was our heart with waiting, and the night-watch seemed so
long,
But His triumph-day is breaking and we hail it with a song.

“ In the fading of the starlight we can see the coming morn ;
And the lights of men are paling in the splendors of the dawn :
For the Eastern skies are glowing as with light of hidden fire,
And the hearts of men are stirring with the throbs of deep desire.

“ There’s a hush of expectation, and a quiet in the air,
And the breath of God is moving in the fervent truth of prayer ;
For the suffering, dying Jesus, is the Christ upon the throne,
And the travail of our spirit is the travail of His own.

“ He is breaking down the barriers. He is casting up the way,
He is calling for His angels to build up the Gates of Day ;
But His angels here are human, not the shining hosts above,
For the drum-beats of His army are the heart-beats of our love.

“ Hark! We hear a distant music, and it comes with fuller swell ;
’Tis the triumph song of Jesus, of our King, Immanuel !
Live, go ye forth to meet Him ! And my soul be swift to bring
All thy sweetest and thy dearest for the triumph of our King.”

—*Selected.*

I

CIVILIZATION

THE most comprehensive and complicated theme to which writers of all ages have given themselves is the history of civilization. Scarcely two have given us the same analysis—as the conception depends entirely upon the viewpoint of the individual. The word “Civilization” is both slippery and elastic. What does it mean? Definitions given us by authorities say it is redemption from a state of barbarism; instructed in arts, learning, civil manners, refined, cultured, humanized. Burke says two principles are fundamental in civilization: “The spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion.” Quincy says: “The sale of conscience and the sale of duty cannot be reconciled to civilized society.”

According to the opinions of students in this particular field we find civilization to mean the establishment of cultivated, ethical relationships among men; these relationships growing out of the high moral character of the individual and the body politic. All admit it to be of slow growth—painfully slow. Several millenniums ago we had Greek learning and culture, and the Republic of Pericles; we had Egyptian civilization, dating many centuries earlier than that of the Greeks and Romans.

But the law of evolution is inevitable, and that

is the law of civilization. Modern philosophers say the race has fallen upward continually. The Golden Rule is becoming the standard of society and government. The logic of evolution forces this conclusion. Oh, they admit, the upward march has been retarded here and there; but a higher level is always the sequel of every depression. They affirm—and this they must do—that we are rapidly nearing the goal. A decade now means more than a century did formerly; since 1840 we have accomplished more than in all the previous ages; we have learned more since 1840 than we knew up to that time. Improvements, inventions, discoveries become history in a few years; they are displaced with something newer and more efficient. All the world is getting the benefits of the nineteenth century advancements: the nations are being instructed in art, learning, civil manners, refinement, and humanitarianism. Such is civilization, and we are heirs of all the ages—four thousand years of evolutionary civilization.

In a Book, thought by some to be obsolete, we learned that in the very opening of human events man parted company with God. A tempter came upon the scene and induced our first parents to believe a lie; told them, by obeying him, they should “be as gods.” Under this Usurper Prince man has gone forward in his achievements. This same tempter came to the Master in the wilderness, and offered Him “all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.” Who is this strange being having such power? The inspired word gives him the title of “The god of this world.” If this statement be true, it can mean nothing less than rulership, superintend-

ency, director of plans, formulator of enterprises; operating the world-system according to his methods, which are essentially *apart from God*.

As the race chose to believe him rather than God, he started it with an insatiable thirst for knowledge and self-improvement. This motive has been the watchword; and when we contemplate what man has achieved—truly he has become what was promised him in the beginning—"be as gods." A stupendous world-system surrounds us—brilliant, overwhelming, exhaustive, and, from first to last, a contribution to man's temporal welfare. It would seem that after so much "civilization"—all for man—that peace of mind, contentment, and happiness ought to begin to be realized. Are we reaching such a goal? So many millenniums of evolution should have brought us into the neighborhood of the goal at least.

What are the facts? A close study of the social conditions—which must be the true exponent of the world-system—will reveal the somber truth that man has utterly failed in reaching this coveted end. "The pot of gold," at the rainbow's end, vanishes from the pursuer; there are more restless, unhappy people on this planet to-day, in proportion to the population, than at any age of the world's history. Those whose position and station in life enable them to appropriate more of the benefits of man's beneficent contributions are among the most unhappy. This situation alone seems to prove that the race, by the inspiration of the gospel of self-progress, has become *as gods*, but independent of God.

This popular Edenic gospel of self-progress, humanitarianism, deification of mind, etc., is often pro-

claimed in the name of God ! It has acted as leaven in the gospel of our Saviour. Paul warns against this very delusion : "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel ; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness ; whose end shall be according to their works " (2 Cor. xi. 13-15).

Deny it as we may, we are worshipers at the shrine of "progress," wrought out by the formula given unto Adam and Eve : "*Eat,*" "*Be as gods.*" Even those who desire above all things to live the life of Christ—the "simple life"—are compelled to honor the doings of man, who is making a great name for himself. The agencies that have developed this stupendous world-system certainly challenge admiration ; its marvelous complexity and detail reveal a great master-builder in human affairs. Yet, notwithstanding the things that do appear, on every hand are unmistakable evidences of disintegration and decay. Somehow, with all the ingenuity of which civilization is manipulated, things do not seem to connect.

Institutions and enterprises seem to have the solidarity of stone, granite and steel—all that genius and unlimited resources can effect—yet, amidst it all, there is a feverish, restless anxiety. The spirit of discontent is rampant ; the rich are fighting like demons in courts, legislatures, and exchanges for greater accumulations ; the poor gird themselves daily and march into the industrial war with no assurance as to what day an upheaval may come which

will cut them off from their base of supplies—with the cost of living rapidly getting beyond their reach. We are “loaded to the guard” with business, politics, fashions, pleasure, science, sport, literature, finance, society, music, drama, industry, commerce, religion and *religions*. The cornucopia is showering these things in our midst, and every one is scrambling for a share; and no one is satisfied with what is captured or attained.

A writer gives a striking résumé of what this world-system includes: “Monarchies, republics, despotisms, laws, customs, traditions, corporations, syndicates, trusts, banks, clubs, brothels, brotherhoods, colleges, theaters, saloons, race-tracks, gambling halls, trade’s unions, philanthropies, inebriate homes, prisons, forts, reformatories, insane asylums, sanitariums, temperance societies, libraries, cemeteries, courts, legislatures, lobbies, stock markets, department stores, insurance companies, newspapers, magazines, flying ships, automobiles, navies, armies, high explosives, diplomacies, peace tribunals, hypnotism, spiritualism, Christian Science, Higher Criticism, New Thought, Woman’s Suffrage, White Slaves, and religious systems.” These contrivances and organizations are in stirring activity to conquer the world for the welfare of man. Those who are moral, ambitious, religious, benevolent, idle, or vicious can find herein latitude for the fullest gratification; but no one seems to find it.

Civilization! Marvelous, stupendous, gigantic, remorseless, terrifying, unmanageable, beneficent! We are told that the whole tendency of world movements is for better things: more learning, better food, bet-

ter clothes ; for conveniences, pleasure, happiness. It is of humanity, for humanity, by humanity ; yet the cheapest commodity on the market is *humanity* : men, women, and children are being devoured for filthy lucre—gain. The thing we call civilization is so tangled that the juggernaut which carries a few up the hill crushes the multitudes under its wheels.

Some one has compared the world to a slave ship ; a favored few, on the upper deck, dance and make merry, utterly indifferent to the groans and suffering of the human vermin in the hulk below. The press, the platform, and often the pulpit are loud in their praise of the machinery that operates about us ; they never tire of calling the attention to what *man* has wrought, rather than what *God* has wrought. Yet we are wearing ourselves out in keeping the machinery going. It creaks, slips cogs, jumps the track, belts fly off, boxes get hot, and pistons break. There is a lack of harmony and coördination in almost every part ; in spite of eternal vigilance and continual repairs it gets out of gear, and disasters are reported daily, bringing havoc to life and property.

We are hastening on to what destiny no one can divine ; but as the complications become more complicated and the problems more aggravated, the crash of things more manifestly inevitable, we believe that by and by we shall be compelled to readjust the whole superstructure, having been forced, through bitter failure, to acknowledge our inability to run the world without God.

II

CIVILIZATION—EVEN IN AMERICA

OUR American people are living in superlatives. Something is in the temperament of a people made up, as we are, from such a variety of racial characteristics that can be satisfied only with extremes.

We boast about equal rights, and the absence of class distinctions in this country. Aristocracy and nobility are generally considered with ridicule, if not contempt, that is, until some baronial *noblesse* lands on our shores. Our American theories, then, quickly vanish. The duke or lord is lionized, banqueted, and furnished royal transportation from one social function to another. As hero worshipers, we are unexcelled. Men are often placed in the most responsible political positions because of one day's military achievement. A social fad sweeps like a prairie fire; a "prophet" appears, or a discoverer of a new science of the kingdom, or a physical "healer,"—and his cash income soon reaches millions.

The sociologist tells us that the "strenuous life" of our American people is responsible for much of the extravagancies which obtain in society, business, and religion. We do not agree, altogether, with this explanation, for there are causes deep down in our

complex civilization that are responsible even for the so-called strenuous life. It does not require a prophet or a seer to have observed an almost universal dissatisfaction and interest touching everything and everybody. The humming-bird flits from flower to flower, never seeming to be satisfied with any ; the petted child soon tires of each new toy and must have something else. The child's trouble is not the toys, but its own unrest and peevishness. Society is being continually carried away with some short-lived idea, fad, or custom. The long-haired, wild-eyed prophet and the short-haired prophetess pop up proclaiming a new "revelation," or a new panacea for all human ills, or new light on mysterious scriptures, special advice as to food, raiment, and domestic relations. Stranger than these eccentric characters and their message is their large and enthusiastic following. It is also remarkable that the wilder and more erratic and unreasonable the movement, the greater the following.

The disturbance and unrest so prevalent are not confined to any special phase of life. Commerce and industries were never keyed up to so high a tension, and sometimes they almost reach the snapping point. Our country boasts of prosperity, as has never been known before ; a great political party sweeps into power and stays there, by the leverage of a high water mark in prosperity. It is no doubt true that the counting houses and commercial agencies show a marvelous increase of business, and an increase of wealth beyond the wildest dreams of avarice. Yet, in the industrial world, competition is becoming so sharp, together with

scarcity of raw material and increase of living expenses, that we are rapidly settling down to a basis of a "survival of the fittest." All small industries are struggling as never before. The octopus known as Trusts is making competition, where small capital is invested, almost impossible. Labor unions are organized to such an extent that owners can no longer control their own business; the number of hours and wages paid are fixed by the union's executive committee. Big institutions can refuse such arrangements, and tide over a strike, but smaller ones are driven to the wall. Thousands of faithful, honest workmen must "go out" when the strike is called by ambitious labor leaders, and their families suffer as a result. In many places every door is closed to workmen who refuse to join the unions, and in every strike non-union men have been victims of mob violence. Oh, thou Land of the Free!

The great army of wage-earners is growing steadily, while opportunities, through labor saving machinery, are lessening in the same proportion. One man who is skilled now operates machinery which does the work of fifty men. The great army of unskilled labor is growing—men only capable of coarse, manual labor, and their employment is becoming daily more uncertain. We boast that American labor is being paid higher wages than ever before in the history of our country, but the increase of wages does not at all compare with the increase of living expenses. Statisticians tell us that during the last decade the plain necessities which the poor must use have increased from thirty to one hundred per cent. This statement does not include the extravagant

social demands, and the wild frenzy for amusements. The fight with rents, taxes, food, and fuel bills was never harder, all things being equal, than now. If a man is fortunate enough to own a home, city improvements, water, light, and numerous other taxes make it almost equal to the monthly rents. We asked the head bookkeeper of a large firm why he paid \$35 per month house rent, when he might soon own his home. "I cannot afford to own a home in this city," he answered quickly; "city expenses are eating them up by hundreds."

Seven-tenths of the farms of the United States are loaded down with mortgages, and many are being closed out annually. Many of the farmers do not own farms, and are compelled to pay exorbitant cash rents. Frequently, teams, wagons, and household goods must be mortgaged to secure payment of rents. We see that no class is exempt from the stringent conditions which confront our beloved land. Worse than all is that not one ray of hope gleams in the future for better things. Political demagogues and pulpit acrobats, of course, may be in sight of the "end of the rainbow." Our country is being overrun by indigent and criminal classes from the teeming millions across the sea, many of which are as unqualified for citizenship as the Igorrotes of the Philippine Islands, and far more vicious. One hundred millions of heterogeneous, dissimilar, and inharmonious people, struggling in the mad race of life for wealth, pleasure, and dissipation: is it any wonder that our cities are hot-beds of anarchy? is it any wonder that suicide, crime, and insanity are increasing at an alarming rate? is it any wonder that

from ten to twenty per cent. of the marriages result in divorces?

A noted specialist declares that on account of "drink, drugs, mad race for gain, mammon worship, neglect of religion, over-exertion of physical endurance, mental gluttony, high nervous tension, child labor, and women as mothers and wage earners, the entire race will be insane in a few centuries."

Our Lord, by His atonement, made ample provision for every need and emergency of this sin-cursed world, and He foresaw the *new régime*, which would deceive, if possible, the very elect; Paul foresaw that evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Christ and His apostles tried to prepare the Church for the great apostasy that was coming. To-day, what is this army militant doing to arrest the tide of iniquity that is sweeping over the land? Why does this magnificent array of masonry, beautiful services, cultured communicants, and eloquent sermons stand like a blind and shorn Samson before the mocking Philistines? *She has denied the Power!*

This writer served some years as pastor in a city of 100,000 population. The ministerial alliance caused a religious census to be taken of the city, and it was found that the entire numerical strength of all denominations, Protestants, Jews, and Catholics, as shown by their registers, was 15,000. Of this number there were as many who did not attend church at all as there were of the "outsiders" who attended. There were 85,000 souls living as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, no church. In this same city Christian Science, Spiritualism, Theosophy,

and secret societies flourished like toadstools in damp ground. "The Church of this World" met every Sabbath in the largest theater, and listened to "sermons" that mocked God, and ruled out heaven and hell. Twenty-eight different secret societies, each having from three to five different chapters, camps, and lodges, met each week, not to mention the labor unions, gentlemen's clubs, and the ladies' whist, euchre, and literary societies. These are some of the by-products of the freest, happiest, most prosperous and *best country* on this planet.

III

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE DAY?

A FIFTEEN-STORY building now occupies the spot. It is a triumph of architectural beauty and splendor. It was months after the work began before the lower stories appeared above the street level. Passing this corner one day during the excavation process, it was with considerable difficulty that we made our way through the piles of material, cement sheds, tool boxes, and machinery. At the bottom of the excavation the aspect was still more uninviting. There were tools, little mounds of earth, mortar beds, sand, and scaffolds. Men were digging, shoveling, and wheeling earth and stone. The hoisting engine puffed away and with block and tackle swung huge timbers and steel beams into other positions. It all looked shapeless and planless. It was a ragged, ugly hole, jumbled and chaotic.

It was weeks before anything resembling a plan could be detected. There was a plan. Perhaps few, if any, of the workmen saw it and concerned themselves about it. Before the débris was cleared from the ground or a shovel of dirt lifted, the skilled architect and the wise contractor saw the vision of beauty, the perfection of which is the towering pile of steel, stone, and cement.

The peoples of our land are struggling and contending down in a pit, as it were ; no one seems to know

the how or the why. Hopes, schemes, and ambitions are crowding and jostling each other like two streams of humanity traveling in opposite directions on the same pavement. A secular editor gives us this digest of the situation, which is well worth quoting : "Everywhere is a confusion of activities. Everywhere is a ceaseless hurrying to and fro. Everywhere is a jostle of conflicting interests. There are the pits of failure and the hillocks of man's small achievements. There are the scaffoldings of unbuilt dreams and tools of unsatisfied endeavor. In a mood of detachment we look upon the wide scene of human operation and wonder if there is a plan. Back of it all is there a design ? Are we moving toward a goal, a common consummation of some mastering conception ? or are we merely merging out of one indefinite complexity into another from which here and there a few grasp a little of what individual desire seeks ? Poverty and crime, war among nations and strife between classes continue. Generations come and go, each with its own history of achievement and calamity, of happiness pursued and tragedy experienced. We educate, we agitate, we legislate. Men rise among us with the voice of a prophet or the dictum of authority, and the multitude acclaim them for a time. They are hailed because they seem to have caught a vision of the plan, to have had some glimpse of the secret design, the hidden meaning of life, the concealed trend of the centuries. But they pass, and their voices become an echo. Others follow, exposing their mistakes. Genius discovers a new force in nature or a new application of some old force, and speedily the whole form of things is changed ; social and industrial con-

ditions are revolutionized. We must reinterpret ; we must readjust ; we must take up the problem again and reckon into it the new factors, with the ultimate solution seemingly as remote as ever."

The case is not overstated, and we may look in any direction and see facts to verify these truths. There are a score of places to begin, but let us study the cities for a moment. If they keep up their present centripetal powers, through the lure of dazzling exhibitions, opportunities for pleasure and improvement, the rural life must suffer an irreparable loss. The heart of the problem of the high cost of living lies in the fact that the country, from which all living resources come, cannot compete with the city. Our people's greatest fortunes are now in the country, but they cannot be made to see it. We prefer the jam and roar and excitement of city life.

Why should our land ever be in the throes of such a struggle? We are rich, our broad acres are fertile, and our natural resources are unlimited. For each man, woman and child in the Union there is wealth to the amount of \$1,400, not to mention the wage-earning values ; and this wealth is climbing all the time. Is there any reason why half the people of our great cities go to bed hungry every night? This statement may sound trite and commonplace, borrowed from Socialism ; but, nevertheless, it is true. We have a giant, impersonal, omnipresent, almost omniscient Something—a social and industrial pragmatism, better known and understood as commercialism—moving with a high hand and an outstretched arm over every avenue of human hopes and endeavor.

To be explicit, one per cent. of the people in

America own ninety-nine per cent. of the wealth. That means that ninety-nine per cent. of the people are subservient to the one per cent. Why should there not be fear and unrest when the destinies of unnumbered thousands of men and their offspring are dependent for actual life upon the caprice of corporate power? There is an interdependence between labor and capital. There should be no conflict, as their interests are one. But when capital becomes so sordid as to look upon men as machines and parts of machines, to displace without reason or warning that a more efficient piece of machine humanity may be installed, hope dies in the bosom of labor.

Again, specialization in industry has destroyed the pride and individuality that labor should stamp upon its work. Who can care for the finished product, say of a shoe, if for ten hours a day they have been cutting strips of leather for shoe tongues? Think of one thousand men merging into one personality or, not even that, into one machine and that machine making shoes or self-binders. The millions are digging, shoveling, and suffering in a pit; they are a part of a gigantic whole; they see no consummation, no relief. Each time the scene shifts, the more shapeless and chaotic becomes the situation. Each time the wheel turns, manhood is crowded into a narrower corner. His base of operations and supplies becomes more and more uncertain.

The blatant flaunting of luxuries on the part of the rich fans the flame of social discontent. Each time a diamond is flashed on the hand of a woman who is being waited upon by a girl who gets four dollars for fifty-four to sixty hours of work helps that girl to

sell herself as she drags her tired body into a cheerless home at night. One lady pays twenty-five thousand dollars for a kerchief. Another buys a diamond necklace for her poodle dog. And this happens within a few moments' ride to where fifty thousand girls must sell their virtue to feed and clothe their bodies.

Do we find the friction of humanity only among the army of wage earners? By no means. Parliaments are at war with kings and constituents. Congresses are fighting each other and against presidents. Editors and mayors are shot down while at their posts of duty. International relationships, even among the best, are strained and sensitive. In conspicuous places of our boasted civilization a fuse seems to be burning near a magazine. We are spending \$800,000 a day to maintain an army and navy trained to perfection in human butchery. On every bulletin-board in this land there is a feverish call for recruits to swell our fighting forces. Men with a grasp of international affairs say this standing army is our only safeguard. Before the breaking out of the European holocaust *the annual expenses of the nations for war were over thirty-seven billion dollars.*

“When the war drum throbs no longer, and the
battle flag is furled,
In the parliament of man and the federation of
the world ”

is beautiful poetry, but as a prophecy it is a dream more remote with the passing years. Our peace congresses would save themselves much mortification if

they were to consult the Scriptures concerning the coming era of peace.

As a seasoning for our complexity of problems at this particular time we have three hundred thousand miners on a strike. State militias are ordered out to quell mob rule; and men, women, and children are shot down in the streets of cities where churches are lifting their spires from every corner. Another section of miners are forced to live a whole year on the wages of two or three days a week. Two hundred thousand railroad men are laid off because business is dull. One million unemployed in our land! The brain grows weary and the heart grows sick at the distress among the toiling millions in mines, factories, shops, and street railways. We believe it is all caused by soulless greed on the one hand and a fight and a protest against hardships and inequalities on the other.

Here and there amid the chaos we catch gleams of cosmos, but before a week or a month an upheaval tears it into shreds. We dream of the beautiful, completed consummation of things. Our souls are ravished by the hope, but it is hoping against hope. We see no plan, yet God is on His throne. He knows all, understands all. Human faculties and ingenuity are wearing threadbare trying to formulate a plan. Out of the necessity and emergency we have introduced a new vocabulary, and it is very popular these days. Here are some of the euphonious terms: Federation, international, interstate, interdenominational, coöperation, brotherhood, union, social service, *ad infinitum*. But the body politic up to this good hour shows anything but hopeful signs of convales-

cence. We are doing our best to infuse the meaning of our new vocabulary into practical flesh-and-blood experiences.

Yes, thank God, there is a plan ; but we must turn away from all the scrambling in the pit. Our eyes must see away from this thing or that. There is a divine telescope let down from the skies. It is lying within easy reach. If we adjust its lenses of truth, sweep the landscape with an eye of faith, we can see over and beyond. In that glad day what do we see? "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men," "A new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The beautiful building now stands towering above the chaotic excavation of shapelessness and toil, and upon this same spot in the glorious millennial morning shall be standing God's administration temple.

IV

AS THE DAYS OF NOAH WERE

THE feast of the Passover was drawing nigh ; the Master was closing out His earthly ministry in His last public address. The disciples had been calling His attention to the great building—the Temple—an expression of the mighty civilization of that day. His reply was a warning ; it was a far-reaching prophecy. The glories of what man had wrought gave Him the text of a sermon—masterly in every way, as the Sermon on the Mount. What He preached in that last address was a synopsis, anticipating all that John saw completely unfolded on the Isle of Patmos.

As the coming tremendous events were being briefly outlined to His astonished auditors—and in order to make matters clear—He reached back to the most sinful and licentious age of the world's history for a setting—a background to His picture. Let us move cautiously here, lest we fail to catch the full import of His meaning. Oh, to be sure, man will subdue the world—force her to give up her secrets and treasures—build, build, build. Man holds the earth, and the earth energies, in the palm of his hand ; he has pushed his sky-line trillions of miles beyond our power of vision ; he defies the law of gravitation, and explores, with telescopic accuracy, the higher altitudes. Christ saw all these things—He, the Alpha

and Omega, who was, and is, and shall be, saw it all, but hear Him: "Let no man deceive you; as the days of Noah were, so shall it be, etc."

We know of no exhortation so potent and pregnant, no prophecy more certainly fulfilled, in this year of our Lord, here and now, as the warning against the lure of great men, great deeds, and great things, which is an outer garment being worn to-day by our civilization on dress parade.

One of our greatest students of American problems says that each time the sun goes down it leaves behind a better world than it found twelve hours before when rising. Ninety-five per cent. of the platform lecturers and educators practically coincide with this statement; our great editors say the same; our leading statesmen—when they are elected—can furnish rainbows for all their constituents; the richest men in the world say it is so; The Hague fully agrees with them all. If there is anything in a consensus of opinion, there can be no doubt about the proposition—impossible for so much gray matter to be mistaken; the world is getting better, *they say*.

However, all the real value we can see in this *consensus* affair, it is very interesting. If we will stop long enough to get a microscopic and telescopic vision of the Word of God and religious truth, as it analyzes the movements of the race, we will be compelled to see that truth—we mean big truth—is never found in a consensus of opinion. The crowd never fails to get its wires crossed, whether when burning heretics and philosophers, or reading the signs of the times. The world's greatest tragedies have been the doings of the crowd: truth and righteousness are crucified

by the consent of the majority. If the *consensus* is correct in this present-day prognostication and verdict, it will be its first score in human history.

There are many things recorded in the Word which we believe, and our only evidence of their truth is—God says so. For example: “All things work together for good to them that love God.” We confess that human tests and proofs break down before this statement; but we believe it because God says it is so. Concerning the truth of Christ’s prophecy touching these days, of Paul’s prophecy, of John’s prophecy, yea, of James’ also: they, or it, rather, as there is a composite meaning in them, they are so plainly being revealed we do not have to take it by faith. If angels were to declare the prophetic fulfillment to-day from the housetops, it would not be more conclusive. The Laodicean Age of the Church is here: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Travail is unknown in the Church; she is satisfied.

It is the Laodicean Church that is to be the forerunner of the Noachian Age of the world. The law of cause and effect operates in the big world movements as well as in the minutia of individual life. The only savor our old conceited planet has ever had is the gospel of our Lord, preached in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. “As the days of Noah were” is an inevitable concomitant with a Laodicean Church. No dam can hold in check the floods of iniquity, when the Church sits as a queen—arrayed in purple and fine linen.

To compare our age with the age of Noah, some will say, is too absurd to give even a passing thought. Externally, there appears to be nothing in common ; but God looketh upon the heart. That long-ago age was coarse and ignorant ; to-day it is gilded and refined ; then it was cruelty ; to-day it is humanitarian. Yet, as the Master looked through the vista, with a prophecy that brought the end back to the present, He saw the moral and spiritual eclipse which we are to-day unmistakably entering. Just how far away the midnight is we do not attempt to conjecture.

A Catholic archbishop said recently that religion was decaying and morals were decaying likewise in the same proportion. When a prelate of Romanism, with his low standard of piety and salvation, can see these things, others ought to sit up and take notice. To deny this somber truth is to betray a mental and moral weakness. Country churches are being abandoned ; city churches are fighting for their lives. The working classes, as a rule, care nothing whatever for the church. In England, we are told, this condition is worse than in America. The rugged truths of the Bible are becoming in disfavor : sin is only the result of environment and education ; regeneration has about outlived its usefulness ; separation from the world is rank fanaticism ; holiness is classed with other religious hoodoos ; the doctrine of hell is a hoax, belonging to the barbarism of Pagan mythology ; the judgment day is here in this world—the penalty and reward are measured by success and failure.

One of our great dailies devoted, recently, considerable space to "Dead Churches." This daily, with

a desire to be witty, used some very pungent sarcasm. It is authority for saying that a society has just been organized to provide "decent burial" for dead churches—a kind of a holy undertaking association—so that the Scripture might be fulfilled when it said: "Let the dead bury their dead."

A closer investigation into this serious suggestion reveals some startling facts: in the great congested centers the church is not to be found—it has withdrawn to more congenial quarters. "Gasoline, 19 cents," appears where once the pastor had his name and sermon announced; a gas company occupies another; a dance hall another—the walls that once enclosed devout worshipers now enclose those reveling in the bunny hug and tango. New York is full of churches given over to secular and unholy purposes: moving pictures, express offices, prize-fights, saloons, dancing schools, training places for girls entering the chorus, etc. This society proposes to tear down these buildings, that God's ancient temples be not mocked.

The Church has not quit doing business, but it has ceased to fight—it is no longer *militant*. Oh, there are splendid exceptions, here and there; but we mean a fight put up by the whole Church so strong that the broken-hearted, pleasure-mad, money-mad world would flock to her windows and enlist in the holy crusade. Great conventions and conferences are held in cities without attracting more than a passing attention; their presence affects the city's moral status about as much as the "Lightning Bug Convention" affected the rising of the sun.

Some time since, a great International Sunday-

school Convention met in a certain city, bringing together thousands of the best men and women in the land : singing, holding street meetings, and speaking in the Sunday-schools all over the city. For the reception and entertainment of this body not one dollar could be raised, except from the churches taking up special offerings. Business firms, boards of trade, and commercial clubs gave nothing. The big auditorium was rented by the payment of several hundred dollars a day.

Some months later a secret society held its annual national meeting in this same city ; this order is given over to fun and frolic : drinking, carousing, and dancing. All the "bloods," however, belong to it—as a rule. This city, which had no money for the entertainment of the Sunday-school convention, raised \$10,000 to give the frolicers a warm reception. This lodge was given the auditorium free of rent, and decorated besides. This honorable society closed out with a big masquerade ball. Who refused to help the religious meeting ? Stewards, deacons, elders, vestrymen, from all the churches, as these brethren make up the business and commercial interests of the city. These same ones lavished expensive entertainment upon one of the most worldly lodges in the country.

This incident is used here only for illustration ; but does it not show an unmistakable trend ? We have no doubt that the reception of the two meetings mentioned will, or may be, duplicated in any city of our Christian America.

Will the Church repent and do her first works ; will she confess her failure—get the power of God on her—

self and the preachers? If she would, the Candlestick would not be removed. Paul saw the Noachian Age when he wrote to Timothy; the Master saw it coming. Just what they saw is taking place. What does it mean—what can it mean? Surely it is Saturday afternoon—the shadows are stretching out to meet the coming darkness—undoubtedly, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

V

THE DISTRESS OF NATIONS

THE caption of this article is taken from words used by our Master ; He was giving His disciples some prophetic talks touching the last days—things that must surely come to pass. It would not be pressing matter much to have used a caption from a statement taken from Rev. xi. 18 : “ And the nations were angry.” The long vista was opened in the apocalyptic seance of the third woe. “ The nations were angry,” declare the four and twenty elders. But for the neutrality of our own and a few minor countries, this prophecy would be literally fulfilled to-day.

This prophecy cannot refer to the historic wars of the past—when nations were provoked to deadly conflict ; though often with little or nothing to provoke such wars—but rather a picture of a wrathful state of mind among the nations, world-wide in its scope. To this tragic situation we are nearer now than ever before. The great powers are gripping each other’s throats with fingers of bared steel. And each one is loud in their clamor, justifying their action—even making God a partner to the horrors and butchery. The few on the outside, painfully observing the cataclysm, can see only that which was spoken in the Scriptures : “ They are angry.”

However, we can use the above caption with a

realism that is overwhelming and convincing—"Distress of nations!" One year ago the horizon seemed to be without a dimming cloud; peace conferences were being called, and enthusiastically attended; peace temples were being garlanded with bouquets. At last they shout: the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man is a reality; we were learning to war no more. Any one who presumed to see other than an undisturbed reign of peace was a pessimistic, disgruntled calamity howler. Only a diseased brain and a distorted optical vision could divine anything but the ushering in of a semi-millennium of universal goodness.

There is something in us that craves such a gospel; it never fails to evoke rapturous applause and handkerchief salutes. Optimism is delicious; it brings the highest market price in the *pulpit* and on the *platform*; nothing will insure promotion more quickly. A sick man with mortification already in the extremities, feeling no pain, is glad to have the doctor tell him how well he is getting along, and he will be up in a few days—"getting better all the time." No doubt a soldier who is shot to pieces, bleeding internally, and burning up with fever and thirst, would rejoice to hear the surgeon say that his wound was not at all serious. Oh, yes, dope is a great thing—and much in demand; and here we want to say with double underscore, *this generation has been bountifully supplied during the past decade or two.*

The world—the whole world—is in distress. Of course, this is true of the warring nations. We insist it is true of the wide world, without an exception. Let us take an inventory of the situation twelve

months prior to the present European holocaust. The Hague at that time was a very popular center. An artist of a secular press caricatured the old earth as a bomb, with an ignited fuse. What was going on then? Here is a partial list: Martial law in Spain; serious trouble in Morocco; riots in China; strikes in England and Ireland; war clouds in Ulster, Ireland, over home rule question; martial law in Vienna; the Commora operating in Italy; food riots in France; revolution in Russia; civil war raging in Mexico, by which the ruling family was assassinated; mining riots with bloodshed in the United States; labor strikes in several cities. These were the big activities which got into the associated press.

Take an inventory of the present-day troubles. The latest bulletin says: Germany, Russia, England, Austria-Hungary, Servia, Turkey, Japan, Montenegro, Mexico, Italy, South Africa, Belgium, and India are in battle array; besides, Mohammedan Persia is fighting Russia on that neutral soil; Poland, though neutral, is like a charred desert; China is tasting war from two outside countries. Turkey and all the Balkan states, including Greece, are depleted and impoverished from a war of which the smoke of battle has scarcely cleared away. It looks as if all these great countries are soon to be a vast graveyard, with mourning widows and weeping orphans everywhere. Then when we remember the poverty and suffering which are the inevitable concomitants of war, the brain reels and the heart grows faint. In our South American territory revolution and civil war have been almost continuous for many years.

What have we left? The United States—dear old

land of the Stars and Bars ; we are rich, peaceful, and powerful ; a bumper crop sufficient to feed all the hungry ; great and good men—patriotic men—at the helm of government. No, we are not at war ; we are not angry. Wait, we are not discussing the anger of nations, but the distress of nations. Now that we have gone the rounds, with all its sickening, hideous details, we are glad to pause a moment where the Dove of Peace—not like Noah's—has found a place for the soles of her feet—our own Columbia.

But do not the Master's words—distress of nations—include our own beloved land ? If the signs of the times indicate anything, fully ninety per cent. of our people are facing a gloomy future ; nearly half of them live in cities where competition is so sharp that it is a survival of the fittest. Some one has said that it is only necessary to puncture the skin of a Socialist to reach the soul of an Anarchist. If that be true, we have over a million men in this land who are ready—once the movement is started—to swear eternal curses, by word and deed, on the present order of things. What is causing this growing hatred and unrest ? The social cast of money—Commercialism—Plutocracy—Class Legislation—Class against the Mass—Industrial Inequalities, etc. In the face of these things, they claim a righteous cause and, while many will and do condemn the methods used, most heartily indorse the principle involved.

We may be dealing in future ; but the future cannot be eliminated when dealing with a situation so alarming. Suppose the war, now raging in the East, should continue for another twelve months, the base of all food supplies would be of necessity in this

country. Already gaunt famine is stalking through the streets and rural districts of the war zone, where but a few months ago were heard the hum of happy, prosperous people. Let the ravages of winter bring up the reinforcement, with food prices already soaring above the income of the masses, and our country will be taxed to the limit ; there will be desperation within our own borders—such as we have never seen before.

Think of our Southland, depending largely upon the bumper cotton crop—and perhaps it is the largest ever known—five million bales—and no market. This market cannot open as it should while all the supplies of Europe are silent, and the workmen dying on the battle-field. Not since the dark days of reconstruction has the South been so paralyzed.

Whether we are willing to acknowledge it or not, these days are the beginnings of sorrows—just what the Master said would come upon the earth. If we doubt this, one thing is certain : the nations are in distress. Furthermore, it is beginning to try men's souls ; fear, real deep-seated fear, abounds. There is not a single feature about it all that should surprise and alarm students of prophecy, or of the Word. Our Master said they would come, although the rainbow prophets and sunshine apostles have been saying otherwise. There is but one thing to do : all who fear God and seek His face—be calm, sober, trustful, expectant, for our salvation draweth nigh. The “blessed hope of His glorious appearing” should keep our minds and hearts steadfast and unmovable. Amen !

VI

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

IN the thirteenth chapter of Matthew Christ gives seven parables, which He denominates as "Mysteries of the Kingdom." We desire to call attention to four of them, as they contain teachings which have given rise to an almost universal error, touching the real content of the Gospel, and the end for which its propaganda may hope to accomplish. Any line of teaching which does not finally see a world-wide triumph has ever been considered out of harmony with the mission and power of the Holy Spirit.

The section of this discussion which we have given the caption of Ominous Forecast would be incomplete, in view of the things that are to follow, without first clearing up the false ideas which have been veritable fixtures in the Church—yes, for many centuries—but such was not the case in apostolic times, and for many generations following. The Master explained the difficulty, touching an understanding of these "Mysteries": the people had eyes, but saw not—had ears but could not hear.

Coming direct to the core of the subject, we find that in the first parable, that of the Sower, the unmistakable estimate Jesus puts on the general success of the Gospel. The gospel truth, with all its dynamic and latent energies, is like a seed—its pos-

sibilities are almost beyond computation. An acorn has sealed up within its narrow shell the possibilities of a giant oak in size and perfection. But it can never come to its grand fruition without suitable environment. The Sower who scatters the seed is the Church, or Churches; the field-world is the heart of humanity—unregenerated and warped by passion, prejudice, and ignorance.

In this connection we must not fail to observe that Christ is speaking of the true Sower—the Sower with a purpose. He is also speaking of the pure seed—the Gospel. The estimate He gives us is what we may expect when the Sower is conscious of a divine calling—giving the truth to the great hungry world-heart; and that truth free from all adulterations. Now, when we consider for a moment the falsehood, low ideals, half-truths, and wrested Scriptures being sown broadcast from so many pulpits and rostrums in this our day, we are face to face with the dark picture as He saw it, and it grows darker the more closely it is examined. If we apply His ratio of reception and hindrances, when pure seed is given out from hands seeking only to obey holy commands, what *may* we expect from the harvest of false teachers—sowing an adulterated Gospel?

What is the ratio of reception? *Just one in four*, and a survey of the world will confirm this estimate; among the peoples of the earth—it is true—even if we counted the so-called Christian nations as followers of Christ. We must also keep in mind that the one-in-four ratio stands for the *hearers of the Word*, those who are touched by the Gospel, feel its power and influence. But over against this fearful condi-

tion there is the great mass who hear no Gospel at all ; the unchurched multitudes far outnumber those who hear. Christ said only one in four of the *evangelized* would come in the end to a successful harvest. The brain fairly staggers under this calculation ; but it is not human exegesis—it is given by the Head of the Church looking through the vista and commenting on what He saw.

First, the fowls of the air devour one-fourth ; then another fourth takes root, but soon dies for lack of rootage—too shallow ; then another fourth is choked out by external influences—briers and thorns. We must keep in mind the false Sower and the adulterated seed—the great unchurched world-field, hearing no Gospel, false or otherwise—before the force of this truth can be fully realized.

But the Master strengthens the figure by another Sower parable. In this one He is Himself the Sower, and the seed He sows in the world-field are the children of the Kingdom—redeemed men and women. The husbandman whose business it is to attend this field is the Church—called the servants. But the church-servant becomes unwatchful and falls asleep. At this opportune moment an Enemy—the Devil—sneaks into the field and sows tares—a darnel-weed resembling wheat ; but the Master tells us plainly that the tares are the children of the Devil. He sows his own offspring among God's elect. Here is the false profession of Christ, and they grow in the same soil, act and speak just like the genuine : children of God and children of the Devil growing side by side in the Church. And this condition must continue until the end of the age. These tares cannot be

eliminated without doing great harm to the good—social and domestic relationships bind them together. The separation is sure to come, but not now.

The Master approaches the great theme from still another angle. He uses an illustration of the mustard seed ; and when compared with the full growth of the mustard tree, it is the smallest of all seeds. However, there is no seed in which may be found more vitality and potential power ; it is every whit genuine—every particle will burn. A beautiful but striking figure of the Gospel in the beginning. The apostolic movement was small and insignificant, but it had the dynamics of heaven in all its operations.

The mustard tree, which is the Church, has sent its roots down deep into the earth, and its branches have spread out into all the world. Just as soon as the Church began to enlarge and gain prestige it went deep into the material things, drawing its life and support from things earthly : plans, methods, schemes at once took on the color of the soil. For fifteen centuries it grew by methods that were not only earthly, but sensual and devilish. It enthroned and dethroned kings—it dominated all life. It does not dictate the policies of nations to-day, but its greatness is in other directions.

Then, it has become the roosting-place of the vultures of the air ; in the first parable the fowls devoured all the seed they could—now they use the church-tree for a roosting-place. In spite of their devilish efforts some seed grew, and they propose to take possession of the spreading limbs. Can any figure be truer to the religious world ? We can find demonstrations of it in every branch of Christendom ;

and the vultures are not all roosting on the branches of Catholicism. In Protestantism we may find every character from saint to devil, living, moving, and having being, by the grace of the Church—roosting in its branches. Protestantism is alarmed over the encroachment of the political hierarchy of Rome, and Rome laughs at the disintegration of Protestantism. Rome is never asleep—she sees in us that no two are alike—doubting, believing, and disbelieving everything; the whole sweep from orthodoxy to atheism may be found roosting on every branch of Protestantism. Pulpits, church schools, editors, etc., etc., teem with men who deny every fundamental doctrine. A trial for heresy is a lost art. They are living on the Church, but at the same time are the vultures of the pit; it is the same brood that tried to devour the seed in the first parable.

But the climax of this remarkable discourse is to be found in the parable of the leaven. From time immemorial we have been taught that the Gospel was the divine leaven, which, sooner or later, would leaven the whole lump—all society—all the world. Nothing could be farther from the truth, as He meant to teach it. Leaven is nowhere used in the Bible to represent righteousness, but just the reverse. It is a species of corruption by fermentation, and if let alone will very soon reach a state of putrefaction. Leaven will sour and rot the whole lump. God always looked upon it with disfavor; during the Passover week He would not allow His people to have it in their homes; for a violation of this law they were expelled. They must eat unleavened bread. It is not a type of the Gospel, but a type of various kinds of social, moral,

and spiritual corruption : "The leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees," "The leaven of Herod," etc. Paul warned the churches of certain evil tendencies, and he said in substance : "Beware of a little evil leaven—it will defile the whole lump," the *Church*.

Now the processes whereby the Kingdom operates are like unto a woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal. We can see at once this cannot stand for the Gospel, as it is by no means to be sneaked into society ; she hid it because it was evil, and must be done secretly. One writer says the three measures of meal are the three branches of Christendom : Protestant, Greek and Roman Catholicism, and it has been injected into all, and is leavening all of them. However, the truth is obvious : leaven is false doctrine, corrupted truth which is silently permeating the whole Church. Think of the dogmas of Catholicism : celibacy, image worship, masses for the dead, transubstantiation, etc. We repeat, also, that every cardinal doctrine of the New Testament has been, and is being, assailed by leaders of Protestantism. The Incarnation and Resurrection are religious curios in some circles ; the leaven is working rapidly—and it is the leaven of evil being silently hid in the Church.

Observe again, evil will *leaven*—it always does ; but where is there a spot on earth being leavened by the lives of holy men and women?—and there are some in every church and community. We have known saintly fathers and mothers who were considered only pious jokes by the members of their own households. Was ever a home, a church, or a town purified by the presence of a few holy people?

The mustard tree, therefore, is the external organ-

ization of the Church—its social, commercial, and political triumphs ; the leaven is the internal working of false doctrines, false principles, and unholy motives. Thus the four parables are strangely connected—each one distinct, but all teaching toward the same inevitable conclusion. First, the Devil seeks to destroy the seed by the fowls of the air. Second, he tries to corrupt and paralyze any good exerted by saved people by “sowing” his own children all through the field. Children of the Devil, side by side with God’s children, having the same authority and power as they. Then, third, he makes use of what he could not destroy of the seed and overshadows by tares—in that he makes the mustard tree—the Church—a roosting-place for his vultures. The purpose of the Devil is to take possession of the Church—dominate it, live off it, and dictate its policies. Fourth, he hides his leaven of false doctrines in the Church, so they may disseminate through the entire “Body of Christ,” until its zeal and energies are stultified and its circulatory system poisoned into inefficient activities. Doubt and unbelief stand over against a living, vital faith, without which it is impossible to live at all spiritually, not to mention a normal growth in grace.

The unity of these parables stands like a Gibraltar, as to what the Master really thought of the Gospel propaganda. Summing up, we find some very significant prophetic conclusions, and without spiritual discernment they strike like a thunderbolt ; but seeing the great religious panorama through His eyes, and interpreted by His Spirit, there are no paradoxes, no contradictions.

We find the world will not receive the Gospel, but the Church—the *Ecclesia*—will be a called-out people. Then the Church, as an organization, will fall asleep and sink into spiritual apostasy. The Gospel will be successfully opposed by the world, flesh, and the Devil. Into every nook and corner the Devil will place his own children, weakening and counteracting every movement for the advance of the Kingdom. The Church will be loaded down with unconverted people, and, as a result, the Gospel will become infected with all manner of adulterous doctrines. The zeal and enthusiasm will be in large measure the energy of the flesh, poisoned by Satanic inoculation. This amazing spectacle will continue until the end of the age, when He will come to judge the quick and the dead, sifting the false from the true, taking possession of His own in righteous administration. Such is the Lord's own vision.

PART II
The Plan of the Ages

HIS PLAN

“Some time, when all life’s lessons have been learned,
And suns and stars forevermore have set,
The things our weak judgments here have spurned,
The things o’er which we grieved with lashes wet,
Will flash before us out of life’s dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue ;
And we shall see how all God’s plans are right,
And how what seemed reproof was love most true.

“And we shall see how, while we frown and sigh,
God’s plans go on as best for you and me ;
How, when we call, He heeded not our cry,
Because His wisdom to the end could see ;
And even as wise parents disallow
Too much of sweet to craving babyhood,
So God, no doubt, is keeping from us now
Life’s sweetest things because it seemeth good.

“But not to-day, then be content, poor heart !
God’s plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold ;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.
And when through patient toil we reach the land
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,
Then we shall clearly see and understand,
And then we all shall say, ‘ God knew the best.’ ”

—Anon.

I

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

“Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”—*Joel ii. 28.*

THE most remarkable century of all the centuries was the nineteenth ; in territorial expanse among the nations it exceeded the times of Alexander the Great. New continents had been discovered, but they had not been possessed and assimilated into the great crux of nation building. Science of government, international relationships, the spirit of democracy—all went forward with leaps and bounds. Freedom of the press, of speech, and general education accomplished more in that one hundred years than all the previous ones combined ; science and invention, touching matters for the betterment of the race, reached amazing results ; in fact, it seemed that heaven was emptying upon us her cornucopia of every good thing—looking to peace, happiness, prosperity, and physical comforts. Many prophesied that the Golden Age of Man was soon to be realized.

Notwithstanding all these foretokens of good things there was and is an ever increasing consciousness of undercurrent forces which bespeak a situation quite the opposite, although not apparent on the surface of things. Even before the close of this wonderful century many began to divine serious foreboding.

This number, in comparison with the optimistic seers, was an insignificant minority.

However, this thing occurred when the twentieth century dawned: the whole world became strangely agitated, and no one could tell just why or how it came about; but an impression was prevalent that something had happened, or was about to happen. This impression was not confined to any particular class of people or countries. Notwithstanding the wide differences of view-point among us, one general conclusion was reached, though with varying effects. It was this: *The world had reached an extraordinary period of her history.* In fact, there was something uncanny about it, bordering upon the superstitious, though it was met with all manner of philosophical interpretations. One fact, however, prevailed: we had reached an era pregnant with possibilities; a time when things must be accomplished and done in a new and a more rapid way. It was as though an unexplainable hurry had gotten possession of us.

Men in Church and State began to think big thoughts, plan big enterprises. Continents, rather than countries, were under discussion. Questions to be seriously considered must take on more than a local interest. The platform, the press, and the pulpit sounded out notes of a larger campaign and a wider vision; the horizon of all human activities began at once to recede; the sky-line moved out—over and beyond. Men dreamed—saw visions; yet the interpretation thereof of what they dreamed or saw no one seemed to understand.

Writers of world-wide travel said that the *general stir* was not confined to civilized nations; but semi-

civilized and even heathen lands, those who knew nothing specially about our chronologies and traditions, showed extraordinary signs of upheaval, disintegration, and a breaking away from the landmarks of the past. Evidently a shock had come, and few, if any, could locate the seismic center; they felt the disturbance unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

The commercial world saw in it an era of unprecedented prosperity, through the open ports rapid transit, and telegraphic touch with all peoples; and in every harbor a market, swarming with merchant marines under all flags, mixed and mingled together. Those who saw this vision looked through eyes blinded to all but the material. But such seers have ever been in the majority; the consensus has somehow been on the material side of things.

But the Church caught a vision—what about it? It was a climacteric period for visions. May not the Church be depended upon to see clearly? What did the Church see? Not a call to her communicants to fast and pray for a sweeping revival; it was a call for money! To evangelize the world? No! But to raise a gigantic endowment fund for higher education, "A Twentieth Century Thank-Offering," "A Bi-Centenary Fund," etc., from among the churches, for the doing of things bigger and better than ever. This sounded good; but it was placing the emphasis on mind, rather than spirit; it was feeding with gold a dangerous tendency. The motive was lofty; but it came from a distorted vision. To verify this statement we have only to follow the stress and emphasis the Church has placed on learning within the past two decades, and see how it has resulted in our un-

doing in many educational centers. Our higher education proved to be too high in many instances; all of which teaches that the millions given under the new century impulse to be used in *university chairs* grew out of an honest motive, but an unscriptural vision.

Another circle of the Church—and the one having a much clearer vision—saw in the new century a jubilee period for missions: “The world evangelized in this generation.” Doors of hermit nations began to creak and open to the incoming Gospel; there were genuine forward movements among religious people, one of which crystallized into the “Student’s Volunteer Movement,” and another in the “Laymen’s Missionary Movement.” Understand we are not confining this discussion to the exact date, January 1, 1900, but rather with a period beginning practically with the new century.

It casts no reflection on the Church to say that a small number within her membership took no special interest in either of the commendable enterprises looking to education or evangelization—not that they were indifferent to both as worthy or necessary, but somehow they read into those world-wide impulses things far more significant than material prosperity or a new intellectual renaissance. They felt more than even sending the Gospel to the regions beyond. J. Hudson Taylor, of China Inland Mission fame, is reported to have said, more than ten years ago, to a missionary gathering: “Brethren, I have an impression, and I feel sure it is from the Lord, that in the near future we shall see the greatest war that has ever visited this planet. I think Russia

will play an important part in that bloody drama. After this awful carnage of butchery, I shall not be surprised to see the coming of the Lord follow closely." (We give this, not as an exact quotation, but it is what he said in substance.) No man since the days of Paul has more mightily prevailed with God and man than this great leader of the hosts in the dark lands. If the past generation has produced a man worthy to give out such an utterance, that man is J. Hudson Taylor. Others less renowned, and some who are unknown, felt and saw in the new century things which cannot be known by physical sciences or senses. If this strange world-wide impression had a meaning at all, it was not pointing to a greater material something—not to a vaster intellectual triumph; it could not mean new brotherhoods being wrought out by human parliaments. Then, what can be the interpretation thereof?

II

THE JEWS AND THEIR MESSIAH

“We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.”—*John i. 45.*

NO greater people ever lived than the Jews; they have shown themselves equal to emergencies under all circumstances and conditions. Though scattered and persecuted, they rise to distinction and dominate any locality where they may be found. From the day God called Abraham from his heathen Mesopotamia the world has had to reckon with his offspring; they were, and are, indeed, a chosen people, and throughout the fiery tests of the centuries the blessing, somehow, has never departed from Judah. In art, literature, science and music they have produced masters; in the commercial and financial world they are the Shylocks of every age and nation.

Just here, apparently, is the problem of the Jews' relation to their Messiah. How could a people so wise, cautious, and shrewd fail in the greatest opportunity which it was ever allowed any people to embrace? Why in the supreme event of all others should they be found wanting, when they seem to fail nowhere else? They have successfully avoided the amalgamation of their blood with other races, and in this they stand alone. They have held tenaciously

to every hope and tradition even when their harps were hanging on the willow trees of exile and dispersion. Burning incense, that rendered their services holy in the long ago, still burns in symbol at least on the heart-altar of every devout Jew ; he sings the songs of his inspired writers of the dead past ; he hopes and looks and longs and wails for the Sun of Righteousness to arise out of the eastern sky. No soiled or ink-marked Bible was ever more dear to a New Testament saint than were the sacred rolls of Hebrew Scriptures ; nor does any student of the Word to-day study more diligently than did those people during the period preceding the advent of Jesus. They were as skilled in the divine law as any judge of a civil tribunal. And yet they did not see and understand.

The Messiah came in the fulness of time, and according to prophecy ; besides, expectancy was in the air. For fifteen centuries they had watched for the Paschal Lamb, who should remove the offense from Israel ; He came and was bitterly rejected—yes, to His very own, and only a few—and they among the lowly—accepted Him. Why was He rejected ? Those who were the authorized teachers of Moses' law and the Prophets were the loudest in their protest against Him. Many have been the theories concerning the *why* of the Jews' attitude to their Lord and King ; there seems to be but one satisfactory reason. In birth, in life, in death, Jesus met every requirement according to the prophecies ; it is all very clear to us now. But they did not see ; to them there was not the remotest connection between Him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write and the

Man of Galilee. The reason is obvious. The Scriptures with which they were familiar *did not agree*—and why? The Hebrew Scriptures are saturated with marvelous things concerning Him—in “That Day.” But the secret of the difficulty is this: *They had read only the prophecies concerning His Second Coming, and had failed to see the prophecies of His First Coming.* They had failed to connect the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah with the Messiah; so thrilled were they with His mighty doings that the humiliation of being led to the slaughter—the stripes—the rejecting of men escaped. No such condition could prevail when He came; their Messiah was to restore the ancient glory of Israel, and all the world would resound with His Imperial Majesty; “the kingdoms of this world were to become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.” In “That Day” it meant the Messiah over all. Rome with her pride and arrogancy would be humbled under the chariot wheels of their all-powerful Deliverer.

The Jews rejected Christ because they had read the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah rather than the fifty-third; sorrow and sighing would flee away under His touch; the breath from the swish of His wings would heal the nations; they saw the pomp and spectacular triumph as He lifted them from degradation to glory.

Now, when this strange Young Man appeared upon the scene—emerging from Nazareth, the “wash-pot” of Palestine, gathering about Him a coterie of ignorant, unsophisticated fishermen as His co-workers—it is easy to understand the effect. Think of this Galilean and His followers coming into a community

making claims never heard of before! This, their Messiah—Never! They were chagrined, shocked, disgusted. When their Messiah came the whole world would take notice, and things would happen. But this Young Enthusiast—and His followers—being the One of whom Moses and the Prophets did write—swept away all reason, not to mention the violence done the plain teachings of the Scriptures. The two accounts were so far apart and so irreconcilable that the statements about His humiliation were not given any notice.

All that the Jews saw or expected in His First Coming will be *fully exemplified* in His Second Coming. To assume any other interpretation of prophecy would be to brush it all aside as being only figures and symbols typifying the spiritual rulership which salvation in Jesus will bring to the heart and life.

The marvelous things predicted of His power and influence have in no wise affected society to any appreciable degree. There is a glittering veneer all over the face of modern civilization, which of course was brought about by the reflex influence of the Gospel; but Jesus rules nowhere to-day except in the hearts of His regenerated followers. The Jesus of revelation stands no more show before the world now than when He was here; the governments are not on His shoulders; the kingdoms of this world are not the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ; to contend that they are is pious mockery. We must expect those marvelous prophecies to be fulfilled in some other way. The Jews knew what they were expecting, but the things that did come were scarcely an imitation.

Fatal as that mistake has been to the Jewish nation, we are making exactly the same mistake, and teaching it to others. We look back on the time when He walked upon the shores of Galilee and say : He is the fulfillment of those wonderful prophecies ; but we say—of course not just as the Bible says—it must be spiritually interpreted and spiritually applied. The Jews looked forward and blundered ; we are looking back and blundering. But for the fact we acknowledge Him as Saviour our blunder might be as serious as theirs. To say that any one of the great predictions concerning His coming reign and glory have been fulfilled is to say that language is so slippery it may be made to mean anything we choose. And we think that way about it. The truth is, the Bible must conform to *our views*, or it is merely a figure of speech.

The coming of Jesus was such a disappointment to His people that they sank into malicious, cruel, murderous hatred, and, as a nation, paid the penalty. However, God has not forgotten His ancient children of Abraham ; the warranted deed He gave them to Canaan will stand after the smoke of battle clears away, and they shall yet possess the land of their inheritance. The Jews rejected Jesus as a nation and not as individuals ; thousands of Jews believed on Him then, and others have done so in every age. Their blindness is national and not individual ; as a nation they have drunk the cup of sorrow to its dregs. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thee—but ye would not,” was a cry over a race. His own followers and the thousands of post-Pentecostal converts were Jews ;

the Sanhedrim represented the nation in its official capacity.

The attitude of the leadership of the Jewish Church cannot be satisfactorily explained on any other hypothesis than that they simply read the wrong account.

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III

THE GREAT APOSTASY

“Let no man deceive you by any means ; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”—*2 Thess. ii. 3.*

NO book has ever been written large enough to discuss adequately the Second Coming of Christ ; it is so vast, so comprehensive, so unfathomable that those who have undertaken it stand amazed as the theme opens up and enlarges. Yet there must be a beginning, and a logical beginning ; the purpose of these chapters is to follow a programme—one which seems to be outlined in the Word. If there is any part of this subject which should attract our attention first it is the one given in the above caption—The Great Apostasy.

There has been much conjecture as to what will take place in this age, or gospel dispensation. A general idea prevails that the Gospel is scheduled to bring in the Millennium ; the world—meaning all society—shall first be renovated by holy influences until the earth is prepared for His coming or His universal reign. Yet no Scriptural proof can be found to support this theory. Notwithstanding the Church, the Holy Spirit, and the ministry—all working at the task—we are taught that conditions shall

grow worse and worse. This conception of the world order of things is regarded as rank pessimism. However, if such is pessimism, Christ and His apostles should be placed in the front rank ; no darker pictures were ever sketched than those drawn by the Master and St. Paul. Therefore, because of the emphasis given in the New Testament of a coming Apostasy, we shall give it a logical setting—at the beginning.

The Saviour was very careful about using dates as to His return ; but He suggested that when certain things were manifested we might know the time of the end drew near. He mentioned the “Buds of the Fig Tree” as an illustration whereby we may have definite data ; but in a subsequent chapter we shall discuss more fully the “Buds” as signs of His coming ; but as we feel that the Great Apostasy deserves more than a place among other “Buds,” we shall devote an entire chapter to this vital part of our argument. If we are mistaken now as to the presence of a religious “falling away,” then all the hopes and arguments of premillennialism dissolve into thin air. It would be ridiculous to go further with this discussion until the facts touching the Apostasy are clearly set forth.

A Kentucky evangelist, more than twenty-five years ago, left on record a remarkable prophecy ; this is what he said : “We are entering upon a starless midnight of church apostasy.” It came like a discord in a great symphony, as rainbow optimism at that time was beginning to spread throughout Christendom. It is one thing to allege, and quite another to prove. However, we wish to state two

propositions relative to this alleged Apostasy. First: we are in the throes of a religious apostasy such as this world has never before witnessed. Second: it is our firm conviction that it is the Apostasy of the Last Days.

But what can we see? In what way is it being manifested? Are there any conditions which coincide with the Word, teaching us that the time is at hand? Or, are we seeing through "green glasses"—are we color blind to the "signs of the times"?

The first confirmatory evidence of an Apostasy may be seen in a decline of interest in Bible religion. Observe, we say Bible religion; we are not short on many brands of religion, but the kind that sustains the standard set forth in God's Word. But we do not have to confine our supposition to that standard, thought by many to be extreme and unpractical. There is a decided slump of interest in any kind of religion which narrows the circle very materially. We do not know of a single church of any denomination that does not have to struggle for life; scarcely a week without some problem testing and taxing the heart of every honest pastor and his co-workers.

Churches are struggling financially. And compared with other financial demands, the increase for churches has not been in proportion. The wealth of our country is growing five millions a day, and our people have light on their financial duty to God. The divine law is ten per cent., and we are paying about *one-sixth of one per cent.* In most of the large churches there are a few wealthy people who "pay out" annually, which helps to make things look good in statistical tables. We see no shortage

in any other line ; our country pays more for automobile tires than it pays to carry out the Commission given us nineteen centuries ago—not to mention the investments in the automobile itself. Our chewing-gum money would take care of our missions better than they are now being cared for. The automobile factories are working over time to supply cars for our *depleted land*, while our missionary boards are facing a crisis. The workers, many of them, in the regions beyond, must soon be recalled if unusual measures are not taken. We dress, eat, spend, travel, just as if there were no wars raging.

Then, a close scrutiny of church statistics will show that we are fighting desperately to sustain the church numerically—actual members. One large association of preachers, representing fifty thousand members, lost nine hundred members last year ; another lost four hundred. Seven thousand churches do business for a whole year without a single addition, even by letter. One great evangelical denomination lost nearly six thousand communicants last year. Our Sunday-schools have lost several hundred thousand from their enrollment in recent years, when the increase of population should have given them a gain of over half a million. Three-fourths of the Sunday-school members are lost to the church—never become members at all. Nearly fifty thousand congregations in this country have no pastor ; ten million children in our land never enter either church or synagogue. These are fearful figures, but they are facts as well.

The present-day Apostasy is also evident in the problem of church attendance ; only about ten or fifteen per cent. of the cities attend church at all. The

seating capacity of our city churches will scarcely accommodate more than fifteen or eighteen per cent. of the population ; and when we remember the empty pews—the churches closed down in hot weather—the seriousness stands out in bold relief. We entered a large church, recently, in the middle west, having a seating capacity of three thousand ; we were informed that the average Sunday morning congregation numbered about *one hundred*. The Y. M. C. A. announced a special men's meeting in one hundred and forty churches, and gave tickets as invitations. A distinguished divine to speak—the hour was three o'clock on Sunday—*less than one hundred were present*. At two theaters, a few blocks away, three thousand men and boys paid an admission to see a vaudeville. One young man in ten only of the present generation ever enters the church door ; what about the coming fatherhood ? The Salvation Army is no longer in the life saving business ; they are running rummage sales, lodging houses, and getting up Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners for the poor. The Y. M. C. A. ought to get busy or change its name ; it is a high class club house for so much per head. Its patrons are not there for religious reasons, but for the bath, reading-rooms, athletics, night schools, and good accommodations. They learn all the popular games, such as pool, billiards, etc. Very little is undertaken for definite salvation of men. The church has lost its hold upon the masses ; because of industrial strife laboring men are alienated. This is wrong ; the church is their best friend—but they do not think so.

A decline in Bible religion is manifested in the spirit of worldliness, which is eating out the heart-

life everywhere; our country is pleasure mad, and church lines are no longer considered in social circles. It requires microscopic dissecting to see a difference between the members and non-members. The amusement craze runs rough shod over church laws; children are spending their evenings at moving picture shows; in some places churches can scarcely operate in competition with them. Modern dances would cause a daughter of Herodias to blush with shame; the "uche-cuchee" of the red-light district is quite tame in comparison; yet the church stands shorn and helpless to oppose these "innocent diversions." The real trouble is not what the church is doing, but the religious condition which allows them to do it; deep down in the soul lies the old, old disease which must be fed on the husks of social extravaganzas. Worldliness is spiritual adultery, and is just as paralyzing to a living faith as was the idolatry of the Old Testament times. "Friendship with the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend to the world is an enemy of God" (Jas. iv. 4).

The second confirmatory evidence of an Apostasy may be seen in the decline of revival power. "In the last days," says Paul, we shall have "a form of godliness, but deny the power." The past two decades have surely seen the fulfillment of this prophecy. Meetings held on Bible lines, demanding repentance, altar of prayer, and a conversion that brings the witness of the Spirit, are among the very rare happenings, even in pronounced evangelical churches. We have campaigns for members; people are urged to join the church, cards are signed; confessions without repentance are asked for; "one-to-win-one"

propagandas are gathering multitudes into the churches. The rugged old doctrines, depravity, sin, hell, holiness, judgment, and eternal punishment play little or no part in modern revivals. Salvation is made easy and popular ; a big union revival, with few exceptions, carries little more conviction with it than a Chautauqua programme.

God says He will judge the world by this Gospel ; and the heart of His Gospel is repentance, regeneration and a holy life, through the impartation of the Holy Ghost. The cheap evangelism of to-day is an evident fulfillment of what Paul saw. "Preach the word," he exhorted, "for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 2-3). There is a dullness and a lethargy among the people ; it is next to impossible to make them feel the sinfulness of sin. Somehow the Spirit has been rejected and grieved until He can no longer get access to do His office work. We want a Christianity without Christ, a conversion without repentance, the letter without the Spirit, a heaven without hell in our Gospel. In every church are found a few choice ones who seek the old paths, but they are in hopeless minority.

The third confirmatory evidence of a present-day Apostasy is the breaking up and the disintegration of domestic relationships. There is not a single social or economic problem that does not strike, directly or indirectly, the home. In the social, industrial, and religious order, the significance of the home cannot be overestimated. "The home is doomed," said a university professor ; "it must give place to a more efficient and coöperative system." As shocking as

such words may sound, that is just the situation. Hotels, boarding-houses, and flats are taking the place of home-keeping; the high cost of living makes the coöperative plan a necessity. Wealthy people are closing up their palatial homes and taking quarters in hotels; with them it is cheaper and easier. The servant question also contributes to the domestic troubles. In a small town there were twenty young married couples, all in good health—all boarding—all childless.

One very serious feature of the home to-day is that it has lost authority. Filial disobedience is startling; some one has said: "There is just as much authority in the home as ever, but it has been transferred from parent to child." Such homes recognize no law; the children are bold and unblushing in their disregard of parents. Here and there may be found a father and mother who hold to the traditional ideals; but the flood-tide from other unorganized homes makes it impossible to live up to an ideal. We are breeding a generation of anarchists at our firesides; children who have felt no restraint will continue to resist it either from the state or from divine law. The seventy-five per cent. lost to the church from the Sunday-school can be explained here: "Disobedient to parents" in the last days. The blame is not all with the children—the parents have sunk into criminal negligence. When God ordered the affairs of the family the father was the head—he is that no longer; the home has no head. The women are a law unto themselves; the children do their own choosing.

We are alarmed over the divorce question; we

have about one million divorced people—seventy thousand annually ; two hundred and fifty a day. Legislatures have pounded on the subject, churches have placed the ban on it, but the moral monstrosity goes on. The cause must be traced back to the home ; our young people go into life with no lofty convictions. Selfishness—throwing off all restraints—cannot fail to reach the divorce court for settlement. Pass laws to make it next to impossible to obtain a divorce, and the ulcer will only be aggravated and inflamed. The trouble lies deep in the moral fibre of this generation ; the centrifugal and centripetal forces of civilization cannot be purer and stronger than the home—God’s first and greatest institution. With this bulwark shattered whither may we drift ?

In a fourth place, the Apostasy is evidenced by Sabbath desecration. We cannot adequately value the one day in seven set apart for rest and worship ; divine wisdom was never greater than when the command was issued to observe this day. For centuries Europe has blatantly disregarded the Holy Day by making it a time for carousal and dissipation ; she is now paying the penalty of seeing every mad passion of the soul turned loose—knowing no bounds, recognizing no law. The blessing of a wholesome Sabbath is unknown in Europe ; and whether men believe it or not, “ God is not mocked—whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”

Our first institution after man and woman were united for the beginning of the race was the Sabbath. The philosophy of this day lies deep in our need ; it cannot be set aside without great harm to us physically, morally, and spiritually. Science has demon-

strated that not only is the day a necessity to man in every department of his complex nature, but machinery must have the strain relaxed for the best service. Truly, natural laws extend into the spiritual, and vice versa. Anyhow, our Sabbath is now in great peril; and when the day is lost, no power on earth—armies and navies, policing land and sea—can check the oncoming tide of social anarchy. It is the bulwark that holds in normal adjustment all our relationships—there is no substitute for the Sabbath Day. It must be kept holy. When we lose God's Day we miss God's Book; when we miss the Book we do not hear about God's Son. The processes all begin with a day; and whilst it lies at the base of all our superstructures, it acts also as a keystone, holding together the arch: God's attitude to man, and man's attitude to God. If our land fails to take the warning of the retribution so rapidly coming upon all the nations, we will likewise be drawn into the maelstrom. "Remember the Sabbath Day."

We shall notice as further confirmatory evidence of a present-day Apostasy the spirit of skepticism and infidelity, now flourishing in schools, colleges, and universities. A great publicist, writer, and preacher said recently: "The greatest war now being waged in the world is not the bloody trenches of Europe; the real battle is to determine whether our Bible shall stand as God's revealed word, or shall it be cast into the religious junk heap by the influences of science (so-called) and New Thought philosophy. The trend is to discountenance the Bible by ignoring its standards, rejecting its authority, and ridiculing its doctrines."

For fifty years Germany has been, through her great universities, putting what they blindly considered the acid test to the Bible, and in all things fundamental it was found negative—Bible weighed and found wanting. Scholasticism has sucked long-stemmed pipes and guzzled beer until God has been about laughed out of her courts. In no place has this work been done more thoroughly than in the church seminary. State schools and private institutions have contended for about as high standards as the church schools.

If we are not rapidly drifting from our moorings, how then was it possible for a Christian nation to place as their chief executive a man who denied the divinity of Christ? Just before leaving the White House this same president, addressing a conference of his denomination, made a significant statement in these words: "We are not large in numbers; people are not joining the Unitarian Church, and here is the reason: *they are getting what they want in orthodox churches; they are with us, but prefer to remain in their own denominations.*" A fearful, slandering indictment against preachers and people. No doubt he did not tell the whole truth; there is not a single tenet of our faith which is not being assailed in pulpits of every denomination. Modern theology is sure the race did not fall—except upward; inherited depravity is a hoax; Jesus was just a man—*primus inter pares*. The Resurrection cannot be demonstrated; the Atonement was not of blood—but example. "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?"

We notice a last confirmatory proof of a present-

day Apostasy in the rapid multiplication of false religions. "Seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." The followers of the Crescent far outnumber the followers of the Cross, although Mahomet started his propaganda six centuries after Christ. In modern times we have Christian Science—a so-called religion which is neither Christian nor science—sweeping the land; not among the sinners, but proselytes from orthodox churches. Once this virus gets into the soul, the result, as one writer puts it, is "mental assassination." Followers of Mrs. Eddy seem utterly incapable of the simplest common sense proposition; notwithstanding, they lay great stress on *mentality*. It is nothing more nor less than a mixture of Hindoo philosophy, old Gnosticism, and Berkeley's "Idealism." Again, when the virus gets in, they die to every scintilla of evangelical faith, although it thrives among the *smart set*, who rate themselves as A 1 in society.

Russellism comes next, whose leader—a self-styled "Pastor," is the biggest charlatan of the century; Russellism has some truth, but it is mixed with much dangerous heresy. Whatever else may be said of "Pastor Russell," he is the most astute and cunning propagandist that has appeared in many generations. He literally fills the whole world with his literature, and is making proselytes by thousands. We believe if our orthodox ministers had been faithful to the people and had given them light on prophecy this mountebank could not have succeeded on such a gigantic scale. Our people perish for knowledge, and we are responsible. Russell is too well known to the public to take time throwing more light on his

case ; however, where he gets in, evangelical Christianity is stabbed to the heart.

Whole volumes might easily be written on "Mormonism," "Theosophy," "Spiritualism," and other cults claiming to deal with things in the realm of the supernatural. They all show the general drift, and are adding to the greater darkness of the cloud now hanging over us.

But the question arises : If all these things are to be ; if the Master, Paul, John, and Peter said so, why push the battle farther ? Why contend for a lost cause ? The mission of the Holy Spirit should be clearly understood, the gospel proclamation should be analyzed. Nowhere does the Word promise a regenerated society in this age, but just the opposite. The "Ecclesia" is a called-out body ; the Gospel, through the impartation of the Holy Spirit, is to woo and win men from sin, away from the world, to be a part of the Ecclesia—the holy Bride of Christ. It is to call out from the world, rather than to save the world. This is the mission of the Gospel, and it must be preached with all diligence.

IV

THE BUDS OF THE FIG TREE

“ Now learn a parable of the fig tree ; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh : so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.”—*Matt. xxiv. 32-33.*

THE Master was not very careful about dates and chronologies, although He was explicit with regard to prophetic events. It was His purpose to put the Church on guard, so that, with spiritual discernment, the Day of the Lord could not come upon them unawares. Prophecy in general is so enshrouded with figures of speech that some doubt the interpretation possible at all ; but it is not so with the Master's prophecy of His Return. Nothing could be more explicit than His parable of the fig tree ; He told them to watch the events of the world, and when certain things transpired they would indicate the approaching Day of the Lord as the fig tree buds indicate, or are a foretoken, of the coming summer.

Just now we are in the midst of strange happenings ; the veneer of civilization, which has so long blinded us to many of the most potent truths, is now being ripped off by the violent hands of the War-God, and each day some new scene shifts into view,

confirming the sacred records. The issue of any metropolitan daily, if read parallel with both the Old and the New Testament, will strikingly corroborate the frightful delineation of the social, industrial, and religious conditions of the "last days," found in the Old Book. If prophecy is studied in the light of history as it is being made to-day, it will be found to be the history that God said would be made in these times. No motion picture ever turned out its tragedies more rapidly than are now being turned out actually by the doings of men and things.

He said "when all these things come to pass" we may expect history's great climax to be near; and we venture the proposition that not a part of them have come to pass, but *all of them*. The buds of the fig tree are opening their petals, and to-day we are living in the noontide of fulfilled prophecy according to His own statement. The Kingdom is nigh—even at our doors. In this chapter we shall examine the buds of the prophetic fig tree and ascertain whether or not they are blooming.

The first bud is the "perilous times" which have come upon the earth; and undoubtedly we are entering into the "beginnings of sorrows"—not one, but many; we can but mention them briefly. The last decade has witnessed industrial upheavals such as have been unknown before; not a month in the year but some great city, mining district, or railroad system is paralyzed by a strike, and not infrequently accompanied with bloodshed. Labor and capital have learned to regard each other as sworn enemies; this generates bitterness, and usually results in various kinds of lawlessness, until life and property are

in constant danger. Social discord, poverty in cities, high cost of living, food problems, etc., are meeting the activities of Church and State at every turn. Organized anarchy is making bombs and planning to wreck government buildings and destroy the homes of capitalism. These are not weird dreams, but things that are actually taking place. A scheme was recently thwarted which sought to destroy all the multi-millionaires on Fifth Avenue. Crime is on the increase; two hundred thousand men are in our prisons in the United States, and a large per cent. of the criminals are never apprehended. "The land is filled with violence," says the Word. Confidence is shaken in all mankind, so that business cannot be done on trust; every line of commerce is unstable. Vast volumes of business is being done, but it is a fight to the last ditch to make ends meet; this is because of narrow margins and sharp competition. Socialism has grown in the past twenty-five years until it is a serious factor in our national affairs. Uncertainty is in the air; no class of business or society is exempt. Each day brings new developments and more vexing complications, and the end is not in sight; he who runs may read "all these things." The world never had so many broken hearts and wrecked homes as the twentieth century has bequeathed to it.

Again, another bud that has opened its petals in a very remarkable way is the rapid succession of great disasters. No less than a dozen of international scope have visited the earth in a few years, snuffing out the lives of thousands, shocking the whole world. Since the Johnstown Flood there has been one, and

sometimes two, each year. These have attracted very little attention for the reason that the public mind is schooled to such things—hence, they are passed by as a bit of general news. Before the report of one is digested another comes. “Earthquakes in divers places.” “The powers of the heavens shaken.” Now the occurrence of great disasters is sufficient to verify our position; yet with the passing of every month there occurs, throughout the world, an average of *fifty disasters*, any one of which can be described only in terms of the horrible. A ship goes down at sea—two hundred lost; a mine blows up—fifty miners entombed; train ditched; cyclone sweeps a town; tornado devastates a whole region; city laid in ashes; building burns—one hundred and fifty girls roasted alive; and on go the frightful happenings. Scarcely a day that does not record from one to five similar to the above.

We are so adjusted to the blazing head-lines of such things that we can read them without a second thought; the people are gormandizers of news, but scarcely digest any of it. Then they come so frequently that we cannot give detailed attention, unless it is the going down of a *Titanic*, a *Lusitania*, a *General Slocum*—drowning nearly a thousand children—or an Iroquois Theater holocaust. The smaller ones do not arrest our attention. The human body can be fed on strychnine, gradually increasing the dose, until it requires an *over-dose* to take effect. But just what we are reading daily in the *Courier-Journal* is a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. Satan, who is the god of this world, is in great wrath; the prince of the power of the air, it seems, is venting his dia-

bolical power more in the direction of destroying human life than in any other way. He strikes anywhere and everywhere he is permitted ; and God, no doubt, allows these things visited upon certain places because of their terrible iniquity.

§ We notice in the third place, as an unfolding bud, the marvelous increase of wealth. This bud did not begin to open until near the middle of the twentieth century. "Ye have heaped treasures together for the last days," says James, the apostle ; teaching that the time of the end would be characterized by the accumulation of gigantic fortunes. In the beginning of our national history we had not one millionaire, and there were very few in Europe. George Washington was our richest man—worth less than one million—and it consisted of landed estates, inherited by himself and wife, from English grants to their ancestors. What have we to-day ? There are over twelve thousand multi-millionaires in the United States alone—nearly twelve hundred in New York City. Not long since, three hundred millionaires sat at one banquet table, feasting at \$25 per plate.

We are told on good authority that one per cent. of our people own ninety-nine per cent. of the wealth ; one man owned and controlled a money corporation of twenty-five billion dollars. His personal income would have supported a city of nearly half a million population. The aggregation of wealth in the hands of the few is on the increase ; there is little or no chance in the future for the unskilled laborer ; his work is being taken from him, more and more, by labor-saving devices.

That we may get a concrete idea of the money

conditions of the times let us suppose a calculation with imaginary figures. If Adam had accumulated ten thousand dollars the year he was driven from the Garden—assuming the event took place six thousand years ago—and had made the same amount every year since then, and were still living: such a calculation staggers the brain; yet he would not be able to enter our big financial circles of Wall Street. He would be admitted into the Four Hundred on his pedigree, but not on his money. Adam's fortune would not grade very high in America's high finance. Wealth has grown, literally, "beyond the dreams of avarice"; and here is a significant fact, verified by the Word: the accumulation of these greatest fortunes has been done by the cornering of the world's produce—the necessities of life. The Apostle James saw this when he wrote: "Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord." What truer picture of our moneyed classes than he gives in the next verse: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter." One woman gives an evening entertainment costing two hundred and fifty thousand dollars; another spends thirty thousand giving a banquet for the poodle dogs of her set; another buys her poodle a diamond necklace; all of which takes place within a few blocks of where thousands go to bed hungry every night. Babies die by hundreds for lack of a little nourishment. Surely we are living in the full bloom of this bud.

We next reach back and pluck a bud from the prophecy of Daniel—it is short, but portentous in fulfillment: “Many shall run to and fro in the earth.” All informed people know that rapid, world-wide travel has developed within the last fifty years. Before that time, few people got beyond their own locality; travel was slow and inconvenient. Now a trip can be made around the world as quickly as the gold hunters could reach the Pacific coast in '49.

Science has contributed to our travel until long journeys are within the reach of all classes, and they can make them with great comfort. Stand at the terminal gate of any city where fifty trunk lines discharge their passengers daily, and some idea can be gained of the magnitude of present-day travel. Get on any regular train, at any station, day or night, and a seat can be found only with difficulty. There is a hurry possessing everybody—going, going all the time. It is “running to and fro in the earth.”

Before the European war, tourists say, one was compelled to engage a berth on the steamer weeks ahead; even the great ship lines crossing to other continents were crowded. The automobile has given new impetus to travel; our country is building national highways, so that long journeys can be made across the continent in a few days. A desperate scramble is going on among the people to buy autos and join the goers; homes are actually being mortgaged to buy them. Why? No reason, except we have the going fever on us. We find the accumulation of wealth and the travel craze began about the same time—a fact which should not be overlooked.

We shall strengthen both the above prophecies by another from Daniel: "And knowledge shall increase." But will this hold good for a recent application? Is it not a fact that from the days of Greek learning knowledge has steadily developed? We are discussing this phase of prophecy because it does have a present-day application—and in an extraordinary way. We had scholasticism of the ninth to the eleventh centuries; Renaissance of French and English learning; but we have learned more since 1840 than we knew at that time. All we had attained up to that time was academic in comparison with our present achievement; high school curriculums compare favorably with the best colleges one hundred years ago. Books that were standard a generation ago are no longer used. We can locate disease by microscope, weigh planets by telescope; step by step nature is yielding her secrets.

We have become so top-heavy that we deify the mind; we do in theory what Paris did actually when she crowned the harlot the Goddess of Reason. We are forcing all problems and propositions touching God and His attributes to a scientific formula. What cannot be brought up to our specifications must be rejected as unsuited to twentieth century mentality. This new régime of learning had its beginning contemporaneous with *wealth* and *travel*.

We next call attention to the chiefest of all bud signs: "Wars and rumors of wars." It would be a waste of time to comment on the sentimental optimism to which we have been listening for the past twenty years—touching the reign of universal peace. Any one who cared to be informed on the teaching

of the Bible, and who believes it, might have saved much of the present mortification resulting from theories exploded. The monumental joke of the ages was when the Czar of Russia proposed a disarmament; it will be remembered the universal applause given the Czar. Chautauqua speakers, and preachers who had no message in particular, received new impetus to their fulsome Gospel.

Before mentioning the present war, we will say that since the Czar's big play to the galleries, and since The Hague gatherings, with Mr. Carnegie's endowment, *every great world power has engaged in war!* All this fighting in just a bit over one decade. England—South Africa (Germans); Japan—Russia; United States—Spain; Turkey—Greece; France—North Africa; Italy; Bulgarians; Mexico; South American countries were engaged either with each other, or in civil war. All the time we were talking and planning peace the world powers were seeking to outdo the others in building tremendous war equipments, adding to their standing army with all zeal. The war department has plastered every bulletin-board with alluring calls for young men to join the army and navy. Germany, however, was not caught in the joke; she signed no covenants of peace; she continued to carry a pistol, as it were, but, on the other hand, did what all the rest were doing, but on a much more gigantic scale. What was she doing? Getting ready for the titanic struggle of the ages. Her success in this present conflict is due to the fact that she wasted no time in peace nonsense, but behind barred walls she has been preparing the mightiest engines of destruction ever

known. The Krupp gun factory was employing seventy-five thousand men, and Zeppelines were being constructed by hundreds.

Since the peace talk began, science has been dedicating its genius for the invention of gases, guns, and high explosives for human butchery. Rifles no longer figure in war ; soldiers carry them just to remind them of past war traditions ; but killing men must be done now by the ten thousands. "The nations were angry"—that explains it all. Twenty nations have declared war, and most of them fighting within one year ; what are they fighting about ?—that is the question. The pistol shot which touched off the magazine should have been settled in a criminal court ; a student anarchist kills a prince and his wife, and now the greatest of all wars is raging. More men have been killed in twelve months than have been killed in all the wars for twenty-five centuries ; Europe is one vast graveyard. A war correspondent stated that if the conflict continued for another year Europe's manhood would be divided into two classes : one-half under the ground, and the other half on crutches. The brain grows dizzy and the heart grows sick at the thought—and the end is not yet. The Master said the end would not be with "wars and rumors of wars" ; but nation would rise against nation. Comment is unnecessary ; about all the nations have done that, and the prospects indicate now that the remaining nations will soon be locked in the embrace of death. Does it not look as if we were hastening to the conclusion of matters ?

We shall be compelled to postpone the beautiful lines of Tennyson for some future time : the war

drum is still throbbing, and the battle flag still floats in the breeze ; the parliament of man has adjourned, *sine die*. The mighty men have convened ; gigantic peace funds have been donated ; temples have been dedicated, but God's word alone stands unshaken. "Not one jot or tittle of my word will pass away."

✓ The most remarkable bud of all, and perhaps least noticed, is the return of the Jews to Palestine, the ancient home of God's chosen people. Since the days of Abraham it has been theirs by a warranted deed ; but the Master saw the long cruel reign of Mohammedanism when He said : "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Nothing has been able to dislodge the Turk ; he has defied the powers of Christian nations since the days of the Crusaders. But what do we see now ? The Turk is doomed ; his rule is rapidly coming to an end ; the scepter of religious intolerance has been snatched from him.

The present crisis surely marks the beginning of the end, so far as the Crescent dominion is concerned ; and parallel with this condition we find the Jews flocking to Palestine in great numbers. Twenty-five years ago there were only about ten thousand in the land of their fathers ; but now there are several hundred thousand. They are buying and building rapidly. Wealthy men of that race, not knowing what they are doing so far as the predictions of God's word is concerned, have invested vast sums of money in what is known as the Zion Movement. Recently this organization had a great gathering in Boston, looking to the buying of all Palestine and reëstablishing the Jews as a nation, which identity they have

lost since the days of Christ—when “the scepter departed from Judah”—at the coming of Shiloh.

To the Hebrew people this means orthodox patriotism ; but to us it has a meaning far more significant. We are nearing the end of the Gentile rule, and the events are rapidly turning in that direction. Before a great battle there is much time and attention given to playing for position : armies are fortified here, detachments sent yonder, movements and counter-movements ; none of the subordinate commanders know why certain steps are being ordered ; only the one in full command understands the movements—the plan is in his mind alone. We are living in the days of mobilization ; there is a shifting for position, and, like the Zionists, the real objective is not known—yet the consummation will soon be unfolded. The Jews are fulfilling prophecy.

The last bud, some will contend, is far from being opened ; but let us see : “The Gospel to all the world.” Sixty years ago Commodore Perry steamed into the bay of Yokohama and found Japan a hermit nation. The Japs tried to frighten Perry away by making a loud racket. Little had been done in the Orient. Since that time the doors have creaked on the rusty hinges of every nation ; the missionary is barred from no land ; all the world has heard the message of the Gospel—“as a witness”—and not to save the nations. The hay-stack prayer-meeting was the beginning of missionary impulse, and it has all been done in the last one hundred years. The Macedonian cry comes from all the regions beyond, and thousands of students responded, some twenty years ago ; ten years ago the laymen girded themselves for greater

effort to carry out our Lord's Commission. Three hundred missionary societies are working up to their full capacity ; the Bible is now printed in over four hundred languages, publishing the news to the wide, wide world.

However, there is no movement or prediction that takes precedence over His coming ; that event stands out in the front of things with the command : "Watch." Although certain things would happen in the process of events, but not as a necessary condition to His glorious appearing. But all the things have happened, and He is now due—the signs of the times are pregnant.

V

FLAMING CHARIOTS

“The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation. . . . The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways : they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.”—*Nahum ii. 3-4.*

PROPHECY ! What a mysterious, unanswerable credential for our Holy Bible. What is prophecy ? It is literally transposing the vision of an inspired man over into another age or century, and making a record of what is actually taking place in that remote period. Only God can bestow the prophetic gift—and only such a God as has revealed Himself in the Book we reverence. We find that God has carefully scattered this marvelous honor into obscure corners. His major messages were not all given to His major prophets. Nahum—one of the humblest of the minor prophets ; of the man we know but little. He delivered one message ; but it had to do with the greatest theme of the ages—the glorious reign of the Son of God over the world He redeemed by the tragedy of the Cross.

We have been examining the “Buds,” or the “Signs of His Coming” at some length ; but the prophecy, mentioned as the caption of this chapter, is of such extraordinary importance it seems advisable to

discuss it further than a mere mention. Among all the prophecies of the Old Testament none is more explicit, or more clearly stated, than the above. Within the past fifty years practically all the railroads have been built; at least, few, if any, of the great trunk lines were then in existence. In the network of railroads, with their flying trains and blazing headlights, the vision of Nahum is being fulfilled without doing violence to legitimate interpretation. Or the street car systems, carrying the multitudes to every part of every city in the world, borne like lightning by an invisible current of lightning, is also a fulfillment.

Yet neither the railroads nor the street cars comply fully with specifications laid down by the prophet. What then? This obscure messenger was allowed to see the wonders that obtain just now—this particular year; not five years ago, but *now*. Fifteen years ago the automobile was a novelty, in a crude, experimental state; they were on exhibition at great national fairs; and the public could enjoy a ride of a few blocks for twenty-five cents. Now there are several hundred factories working over-time to supply the demand. Gigantic business, and it is growing daily; the passion for owning a car has gone down through all circles of society. It is no longer a desire, but a *craze*. First, they were only a pleasure freak; now they are an industrial necessity. Those who are not able to own one are forced to do so; otherwise, competition is impossible. They are no longer confined to the large cities, where big interests obtain; but towns and villages also, throughout civilization, are keeping up the pace.

Therefore, the prophecy is fulfilled in a most as-

tonishing manner. The chariots are literally swarming—"raging"—in the streets. Speed laws are being inaugurated to check the hazard of the dashing auto; but the laws have accomplished but little. They continue to rage in the streets—with flaming torches. But the speeding, jostling cars—which are a continual menace to life every hour in the day, where there is any pretense at being modern—does not finish the prophet's specifications. They bear flaming torches, powerful search-lights, illuminating the roadway with a dazzling glare for half a mile ahead. Torches! The prophet saw them, just as we see them to-day, and, knowing no other term for such things, called them torches. He saw our streets crowded with them, each one sweeping the landscape with "flaming torches," several hundred candle power.

"They shall jostle one against another in the broad ways." We wish to observe another significant phase of this prophecy. Within the past two years a new movement has swept all over the land—it is the building of great highways. These highways are now under construction, some of them already built, stretching thousands of miles in length. If the movement continues for five years automobile pikes will reach every section of the United States. Upon these smooth, solid thoroughfares automobiles of every size and price will be jostling, as it were—one against another—day and night. The railroad traffic will not compare with it; the "running to and fro" will be by means of the automobile. Railway trains will not be able to compete with them; travel will be principally by the modern chariot. And they will run like the lightnings; forty to sixty miles an hour will be

possible, where conditions are favorable; and the "highways" will meet every requirement.

Just what is now going on Nahum saw—and "that day" was to be the "Day of His Preparation." Hence, the latest invention for the pleasure, comfort, and utility of man—who proposes to enjoy it, even with greater efficiency and comfort as the years pass by—is a sounding gong, the reveille, calling for a mustering of forces, a mobilization of events, awaiting the Epiphany of Him who is to come in the clouds, the glory of which eye hath not seen, neither can tongue describe. "In the day of His preparation." Think of it, dear reader, as man is preparing for the largest possible life, measured by the things of time and sense, He is preparing to return—we doubt not—to catch away His Bride from the approaching, impending storm—*The Great Tribulation*.

VI

HIS INVISIBLE COMING

“Behold I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”—*Rev. xvi. 15.*

THE student of millennial prophecy will observe some seeming contradictions of statement; much is said about His coming in such a manner as to astound and overwhelm the whole world. The thundering trumpet, the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the world mourning because of Him. Parallel with these statements are found equally as many about the secrecy of His advent. The Master placed great emphasis on this phase of His return; it was to be as a thief, who steals in at a time when no one expects him, and the household is not aware of what has happened until all is over. He illustrates it by a man's house being broken open while he slept. Also the parable of the ten virgins teaches the same idea. It is this invisible coming we wish to examine here.

It will be observed that we are following a definite programme—if it be lawful to use such a term in connection with this great scheme of the centuries. These apparent conflicts of statement, regarding the “thief” idea, and the “every eye” feature of this mighty event, are simple enough: His coming will be *twofold in its character*—two manifestations of the same act.

It will be remembered that when Jesus came the first time, it was in like manner—*twofold*. Only a few were looking for Him ; and to those choice spirits, such as the Magi, the Shepherds, and Simeon, was He first revealed. In other words, He came first to His very own—no public crier announced the pathetic drama being enacted in the stable. It was indeed a *secret coming* to His own Church. There was an inner circle, even among the Jews, to whom He first made known His character and mission. Afterwards, His manifestation took on a much wider sphere ; His proclamation became universal ; His mission was to the whole world—but not so in the beginning. Practically, the first coming of Jesus Christ was twofold ; it was first invisible, so far as the world generally knew about it ; then it was visible and public in every way. In like manner will be the Second Coming of Christ.

As the Master emphasized His secret coming, so we wish to do the same, as it is the most important and extraordinary feature of all ; it will be as a thief, in that no one will know of its approach while it is in progress, or afterwards, except that an unusual thing has happened. The thief never announces his purpose to visit a store, or break open a safe ; if the owners knew of his coming, the looting would not take place. The owner would be prepared with officers, or other means of self-defense, so that the burglar business or plans would never materialize. No, the thief comes under the cover of night ; the darker the better. He wishes no “friendly stars” to assist him. This fact concerning the Lord’s Return makes it all the more interesting and eventful ; it carries a

tremendous appeal—the *thief* idea. Under the cover of night He steals back to earth, where He was despised and rejected of men so long ago. However, in the days of His humiliation, there were the few who loved Him and followed Him ; so has it been all the way down through the tragic years : some have followed the Lamb whithersoever He went ; and for those—all of them—He will come again—*secretly*.

Although the knocking will be unexpected, so far as the exact day and hour, it will not be a shock or a surprise ; it is the Bridegroom coming for His Holy Bride, and a bride ever longs for the coming of the bridegroom. The promise is to those who love His appearing ; our relation to Christ is that of a lover, and it is the faithful lover who yearns for the coming of the one beloved. That part of the Church which has been unfaithful to their holy vows and have flirted with the world will not look for Him, and will be dumfounded when He appears.

Some extraordinary things will occur when He comes as a “ thief ” ; the primary object of that secret mission will be to “ gather His elect ” from out the whole world. He will come not to any, or for any, but His very own ; this will be world-wide and instantaneous. It may be in the bright blaze of noon-day ; but it will be just as secret as if it were at midnight. The Bride of Christ—here in this world of sin—is a called-out body ; they are in the world, but not of the world. Just in proportion as we have been a separate and peculiar people will that day find us watching—expecting.

That part of the Bride who are like their divine Head will be caught up by the magnetic power of

His presence. How will it be done? To illustrate: cover steel filings with a thin layer of dust; then pass a strong magnet near the covered filings, and they will leap from their graves, as it were, and join themselves to the magnet. So that part of the Church, which is like Him, will be raised from earth—dead or alive, to meet Him in the air. In Rev. xx. 6 it says: "Blessed and holy is he who hath a part in the first resurrection." And Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, said: "For this I say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall be raised first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (Who? The dead in Him—faithful Christians of all ages) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." This Scripture teaches us that He is coming for the faithful of all ages, past and present, dead and living, who are in Christ. Every old and forgotten graveyard—the unmarked sleeping dust—the lost at sea, will come forth at the sound of this mighty trumpet, which shall reverberate throughout the earth. But ears tuned by the Holy Spirit can alone hear the trumpet. The faithful ones living, asleep or awake, will hear the call of the Bridegroom. The impenitent and unsaved, both dead and alive, will know nothing of all this tremendous shifting of the scenes.

Herein is the meaning of the Master's words when He said: "I tell you, in that night there shall be

two men in one bed ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke xvii. 34-36). He comes as a thief, and the world—literally sleeping in sin—will never know when He comes, but will be left behind. The living and dead, who are His at His coming, will be caught up together with Him in the air. This is the rapture. "The rest of the dead lived not again, until the end of the thousand years." The word teaches a "First Resurrection," and the living saints, at that same time, will be changed instantaneously, "in the twinkling of an eye," from the earthly to the heavenly. The living will have no advantage over the dead—but the rapture will be *together*.

This is a blessed hope. It was the one hope that burned to white heat in the Apostolic Church ; Paul confidently expected his Lord to return during his lifetime ; it was the heart of the Gospel for over three centuries. The *cross*, the hungry lions, the stake, and all the other inhuman tortures plied by Rome lost their sting, because the martyrs expected Him soon to return—then whether dead or alive, it mattered little. Not until the conversion of Constantine did this blessed hope grow dim. Rome then threw her cold pagan arms around the Church and the world, smothering the fires of experimental salvation, and ushering in what they considered the millennium—but it was the chill of death. The glow of His coming was smothered out in the fourth century, and Rome, who did it, has been an inveterate enemy of this pre-millennium hope ever since.

We wish to pause a moment longer on the tragedy of His invisible coming and what it will mean to the world. Let us try to imagine what the taking away of His Bride will mean : the wicked husband will find no faithful wife by his side if He comes at midnight. The sinful man will observe that his fellow laborer has suddenly vanished if He comes in the daytime ; the faithful pastor will be strangely missing ; the cook will not show up in the morning to prepare the meal ; the janitor will fail to open the store or factory—clerks, bookkeepers, and servants will be seen no more. Such will be world-wide ; just what will happen in Louisville will happen in New York and London.

Who will remain behind ? The nominal church member ; the worldly hireling in the pulpit ; the social crazed men and women ; the vile blasphemers, and all who do wickedly. This tremendous situation will encompass the whole earth at once. Head-lines telling of the “missing ones ” will appear on the front page of all the big dailies ; but it will be an overwhelming catastrophe which will not be fully understood or explained. Think of living in any town or city wherein no devout men or women lived—no Holy Ghost preachers—all gone ; faith dead—prayers no more heard ; the land swarming with the vile and unregenerate. Such will be sufficient to bring on a time of universal mourning, which will be but a foretaste of the Tribulation soon to follow. We find no appeal greater than the dreadful consequences of not being ready to meet Jesus in peace when He comes.

Many have associated His coming with the end of the world—Judgment Day, heaven and hell ; but it

means nothing of the kind. The programme leading up to the last great day has just begun ; He will come at the end of the "age," not the end of the world. Two things will follow the invisible coming of Jesus for His Church. Remember we are to meet Him in the air ; now where Jesus is, there must be harmony and victory ; this will not be possible, even in the air, until the arch-enemy has been eliminated. First, therefore, will be the *dethroning of Satan*. This sounds like idle talk, but it is not. We have ever associated Satan with the land of lost spirits—"the Devil in hell" is often heard—"every devil in hell, etc.," all of which are not taught in the Word. The Devil is not in hell, neither are his demons ! Thank God they will be some time, but not now. What do we mean by *dethroning Satan* ? He is the "prince of the air," and the "god of this world," and Paul, speaking, says : "Spiritual wickedness in high places." If these Scriptures mean anything Satan is not *below*, but *above* ; his throne is now in the heavenly places. Think of his vantage ground—seated where he can observe all the doings of the earth every twenty-four hours as it revolves past him—taking in all the movements, and planning his marches and countermarches to thwart all the activities for the advance of Christ's kingdom. Then when we remember he has millions of emissaries swarming around our sin-cursed planet, like bees swarming about a hive, we can readily see how the power of evil is omnipresent. But he is going to be *dethroned* : "he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

The Master said that Christians were the salt of the earth ; now let us imagine what it will mean to have

all the saving forces removed; for when He comes for His own, the salt will be taken out. All the pious men and women gone; their prayers and influence no longer present as an antidote for the evil so natural in this world of human depravity. Then we remember that Satan and his cohorts will come in to occupy the place once held by prayer and faith—supplementing the iniquity of an unsaved and Christless inhabitation. We have known of wickedness abounding in many places—even with the mighty power of Christ and His people being present in a measure; but what will it be with all of them removed and the Diabolus of the ages having his headquarters in the earth, with no power or person to question the supremacy of his reign?

Who will be here to witness and experience the presence of this “swarm like unto locusts,” filling the earth as smoke from the pit? The liars, thieves, murderers, gamblers, horse-race fiends, dirty politicians, unconverted church-members, adulterers, society men and women, arrogant, plutocratic rich, covetous, proud, and, lastly, the liquor dealers and promoters—if He should come before we wipe the traffic from the earth; yea, all these will be left behind, with no influence to counteract, but the Devil and his cohorts to be chief boosters. This condition will usher in the Great Tribulation—*τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης*—“the tribulation the great one.” But we shall discuss the Tribulation in a subsequent chapter. Our present purpose is to examine the conditions leading up to it, and nothing could be more reasonable.

After the events in the air—Satan eliminated—the

Bridegroom will celebrate the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" with His Holy Bride—the Church—the "Lamb's Wife." Just what that climacteric feast will be is not given us to know; sufficeth it will be the crowning event to which all the saints are called to enjoy. We cannot imagine the magnitude of its splendor; but it is placed before us in language illustrative of a supreme ecstatic occasion: *A Marriage Banquet*. No other term could convey the idea of happiness so well. The rapture has a twofold meaning: first, violently being carried away by force; but the violence will be a realization of a most pleasing passion—a flush of joy—agreeable excitement. We must think of spasms and delirium of delight—the intoxication of love's highest expression—exaltation of feeling. All these are consummated in the meeting in the air, where the Bridegroom receives and seals the Bride to Himself: "So shall we ever be with the Lord." The triumph will be complete and the testing will be over: "The wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary will be at rest." Thank God—and it is coming!

Let us get a second view of the rapture: who has not observed the excited, flushed, joyous expression on the face of a beautiful bride being led away from the nuptial altar. Her love and union is sealed to the bridegroom of her heart. So will it be with the tired, care-worn, persecuted Church when she meets face to face Him whom they have followed through this veil of tears.

We must not overlook another feature of this Marriage Supper; let us recall again the figure of the young bridegroom; see him each moment during the

festivities: there reigns beauty, mirth, and music all through the banquet hall; but he has eyes, ears, and attention only for *one*—the blushing, happy creature by his side. He observes and satisfies every little wish; one word or request, and he is all attention. God has wisely placed this figure before us that we may comprehend, in a small way, the reality of what Christ has in store for those who love His appearing: “He will gird Himself and serve them.” These faithful saints are blood-bought trophies; and as they have honored Him here in this adulterous generation He will honor them yonder—He will not be ashamed of them!

A question might arise here as to the length of time allotted to this great event. There are several estimates, but at best it is only conjecture. We do know, however, it will last as long as the Tribulation. Some scholars tell us the Tribulation will last forty-five years, basing this estimate on the difference between the 1,290 days and 1,335 days mentioned in the last chapter of Daniel—days denoting years. Others have put the time at seven years. The Master, speaking of the Tribulation, said it would be shortened, else no flesh would be left on the earth. We prefer not to dogmatize on points that are not clearly stated, and especially have no significance to the main truth set forth.

There is a significant warning taught in the story of the unprofitable servant, who said his Lord delayed his coming, and at once began to take part in the pleasures of the world. Then, suddenly, the Lord came, and found him allied with those who scoffed at righteousness and holy obligations; where-

upon he was given a part with the hypocrites and unbelievers. Failing to watch, he was found unprepared. A story : a young man was engaged to a beautiful girl, who was above him in social and financial circles. He was too proud and ambitious to take her from a home of opulence and comfort to one of necessity very humble, although she was willing to make the sacrifice. He went away to build up his fortune ; alone he labored in mines and upon ranches, but his heart kept singing through the long, lonesome years—looking for the time to come when he would return for his waiting betrothed. Letters passed as often as possible in his far-away inaccessible region of preparation. Fortune smiled on him, and after some years he was ready to return. But he decided to return unannounced, so as to surprise the girl for whom he had waited and suffered so long. It was after dark when he approached the old home ; all the place glowed with brilliant lights, and there was sound of music and merriment. Anxious to ascertain the meaning of what he saw, he stole among the carriages, and under the shadow of trees to the rear of the house. In an alcove at the end of a large veranda, where burned a subdued light, a sight met his gaze that caused his heart to almost cease and the blood to chill in his veins. What did he see ? It was the girl—for whom he had waited so long, and spent so many lonely nights—in the arms of another man ! He sank back into the darkness and was gone forever ; she never knew he came. Thus will it be to those who forget to watch and seek the patronage and friendship of the world. Our Lord will come as a thief, and they will never know He came until

it is too late. "What I say unto one, I say unto all—Watch!"

WATCHING

- " It may be in the evening,
When the work of the day is done,
And you have time to sit in the twilight
And watch the sinking sun,
While the long bright day dies slowly
Over the sea,
And the hour grows quiet and holy
With thoughts of me ;
Let the door be on the latch
In your home,
For it may be through the gloaming
I will come.
- " It may be when the midnight
Is heavy upon the land,
And the black waves lying humbly
Along the sand ;
When the moonless night draws close,
And the lights are out in the house ;
When the fires burn low and red,
And the watch is ticking loudly
Beside the bed ;
Though you sleep, tired out, on your couch,
Still your heart must wake and watch
In the dark room,
For it may be that at midnight
I will come.
- " It may be at the cock-crow,
When the night is dying slowly
In the sky,
And the sea looks calm and holy,

Waiting for the dawn of the golden sun
Which draweth nigh;
In the chill before the dawning,
Between the night and morning
I may come.

“ It may be in the morning,
When the sun is bright and strong,
And the dew is glittering sharply
Over the little lawn;
With the long day's work before you,
You rise up with the sun,
And the neighbors come in to talk a little,
Of all that must be done;
But remember that I may be the next
To come in at the door,
To call you from your busy work
For evermore;

“ As you work your heart must watch,
For the door is on the latch
In your room,
And it may be in the morning
I will come.”

—*Selected.*

VII

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

“For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.”—*Matt. xxiv. 21-22.*

“These are they which came out of the great tribulation . . . washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”—*Rev. vii. 14.*

WE now come to the most tragic phase of all these tremendous happenings—The Great Tribulation! When we think of all that has transpired during the race's career, and that none of those bloody pages can be compared with the coming one, we shudder and the brain grows dizzy—ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης—“out from the tribulation the great one.”

The Bible undoubtedly teaches that such a time is yet to come to the earth, overshadowing all wars and revolutions in its suffering and destruction of human life. When Carthage fell under the mighty scourge of Rome it was a miniature tribulation. After days and weeks of pounding by the battering rams the walls at last crumbled; then it required nine days of fire and sword to wipe out every living thing, so that not one vestige of that proud Queen of the Mediterranean remained. The fall of Jerusalem by Titus

marks another fearful blood-curdling page of history ; the suffering was indescribable ; mothers, frantic from hunger, ate their own sucklings. When the Black Plague almost depopulated London, it looked as if the blow had fallen by the hand of some mighty avenger. Paris tasted some of the bitterness of tribulation during the Reign of Terror. France had utterly rejected God, and her cup of indignation filled to the brim. A writer tells of that time as follows : "She stood up and blasphemed His name, defied His power, and dared Him to send His thunderbolts and do His worst. But God did not send lightning to blast that impious nation. He simply let her alone. All moral restraints were removed. The hell in her own heart burst forth. The guillotine and the revolutionary axe did surer execution than the lightning. Suicides and murders turned France into a slaughter pen. The Seine actually ran with blood. The children of murdered parents so enraged the officials that they herded them together and shot them down like brutes." It would be an easy task to convince Belgium, Poland, and Turkish Armenia to-day that the Tribulation had come. But all these combined cannot be compared with the one yet to come upon the earth. "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation" (Dan. xii. 1). The Old Testament and the New agree perfectly as to its scope and character ; tribulations thus far have been local ; this one is to cover the whole earth. No spot will escape this coming visitation.

We find the purpose also clearly stated. Hear it : "For, behold the Lord cometh out of his place to

punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity : the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." First, let us keep in mind the Great Tribulation is a chastisement from the Lord for transgression of His laws—His laws are "holy, and just, and good," and the nations have utterly disregarded them. God is love, but He is also just ; sins of individuals and nations must alike be dealt with according to the law of righteousness. There are only two ways in which to deal with sin—whether it be a lone man, or a proud nation with its millions of men and money—it must be *Biblically repented of, or punished*. Nations have not repented—they are not going to repent ; they have no need to repent ; they are rich and great. Therefore, God must punish them according to their iniquity. Individual nations in the past have had their tribulations ; but thus far it has not covered the earth.

Second, "The earth shall disclose her blood." It will be a time of wholesale slaughter. Multiply the scenes in and around Warsaw—where over a half million men were slain in a three weeks' campaign—by the same amount of territory on the whole earth, and you will get some idea of what is awaiting us. Like the field of Shiloh, men fought their way down to the stream flowing between the armies, seeking water, and found blood. In that day the soil cannot soak up the human blood ; the streams will not carry it away ; it will be "disclosed."

Third, "No more cover her dead." Horrible, shocking statement. What can it mean ? Murder and bloodshed will be so rampant the living will not take the time, or have the desire, to bury the dead.

In war times an armistice is often called for the purpose of caring for the dead and dying—but during the Tribulation the dead will remain unburied. Can we grasp the full meaning of such a condition? In a Turko-English engagement, recently, three thousand Turks lay dead on the field for six days; whereupon the stench became so fearful that an opportunity was given to bury them. Cruel and inhuman as are the wars among nations to-day, they do not sink to the low plain of brutality as we find predicted of those days.

God is long suffering—"slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy"—but the time comes when He has a controversy and a settlement to make with the nations: "For thus saith the Lord God . . . Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink it and be moved, and mad, because of the sword I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink" (Jer. xxv. 15-17). Surely God is not mocked: the nations have sown to the wind—the whirlwind will come. Note that in all these prophecies no reference is made to a nation or a city locally, but in every place the reference is made to the whole world.

We wish now to call the attention of the reader to another phase of the Tribulation; a complete change takes place in the programme, weird and fearful: *hell is turned loose in the earth*, and it seems to stop the murder and bloodshed, but introduces a new method of torment. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven to the earth: and

to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth : and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree ; but only those men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months : and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. . . . And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails : and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit."

The king is none other than Satan, and the locusts are demons, swarming all over the earth in the form of scorpions, with stingers in their tails. But they sting nothing but men. Poor pleasure-intoxicated man, who lived only for self, will be visited with wrath of which language is inadequate to describe. The terror and suffering from those stinging imps will be such that men will seek death, but it will flee from them. It would seem that in the first features of the Tribulation men were drinking a brimming cup of wrath to its dregs, but the full measure of the Day of Wrath is not reached until the visitation of

tormenting demons. Death would be a gracious relief, but they must suffer on. We can but conjecture as to the length of time five months will be ; but if it were actually five months as we count time, it would seem like an age.

Again, the horror of those days will be enhanced by great physical disturbances which, coming alone, and affecting the whole world, would cause paroxysms of fear : “ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and waves roaring ; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken ” (Luke xxi. 25-26).

Here is another situation which beggars description : “ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage ; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again ” (Isa. xxiv. 20). Here we behold the magnificent achievements of man—his blazing civilization—torn into shreds ; it goes down with a crash. For several decades we have been placing the crown on the imperial power of mind ; but its dominion shall come to a spectacular ending. In Luke xix. 27 we find further light thrown on the why of such a climax. Hear it ! “ But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” There are two classes who will be left behind after the rapture—two classes of unsaved who must go through the Tribulation. One class procrastinated their day of salvation ; expected some time to make

peace with God, but neglected to do so. When the Bride was taken, they were left. Another class are the scorers—Christ rejecters—haters of all that is good and godly. In open defiance, they scorn all religious pretenses, and mock at pious people. Upon this class the wrath of God will fall. “Bring them before me, and slay them”—this parable will not be finished until the Tribulation. Like the days of the Reign of Terror, there will be no need of an executioner from heaven, as the killing will be done by the men themselves, when all moral restraint is removed.

A brief résumé will serve to bring all the facts before us as to the different stages or events of the world’s greatest tragedy when it is being acted out.

1. It will be a time of universal bloodshed, covering the whole earth; all the vile, hateful passions of the race will go unbridled; without restraint the slaughter of men and women will continue unrebuked and unpunished. Such will be so common that funerals will be discontinued; the orderly processions to the city of the dead will be unknown. That is not all: not only will the dead remain unburied—but *there will be no mourners*. The finer feelings of cultivated civilization will be dulled to brute force—sympathy will be dead.

2. It is the day of reckoning—but not the final judgment; it *is* a judgment, or, rather, a day of retribution. God will deal with men as individuals in the Judgment Day; but He is dealing with the nations in the Tribulation. The free agency of men has allowed them to break all His laws with impunity, and without apology. This state of things

will come to an end, and He will make settlement by turning in the flood-tides of evil—lashed into fury by the angel of the bottomless pit.

3. The gates of darkness will be opened wide, and the prison house of damned spirits, as it were, will belch out its minions of night. Those demons will be turned loose among men—swarming like locusts and stinging like scorpions. At this particular period, it seems, murder will cease; men will leave off their hatred and destruction toward each other in an effort to get respite from the stinging demons. In this they will utterly fail; torment here reaches a climax. They will seek death and will not find it. They will not be allowed to commit suicide, but will be forced to suffer on for the term of five months—which may mean five years or more.

4. It will be a time of physical disturbances, such as have never been known, notwithstanding the disasters of Pompeii, Martinique, Galveston, Masena, and others. Earthquakes and tornadoes will abound; one fearful demonstration of elements will follow another. The earth will tremble and stagger like a drunken man. We find a vivid prophecy of these things when the sixth seal was opened: “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became as black as the sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places” (Rev. vi. 12-14).

Language runs riot here in an effort to depict the dreadful scenes of that day.

5. But in these somber reflections—to describe which language becomes weak and meaningless—there is one golden ray of light ; rather strange, but true. The Bride and the Bridegroom will have been withdrawn ; but the Fountain of salvation will be open. Hell will be turned loose, but God will not forget the world ; or in other words He will not forget the unfortunate ones who revered His name, gladly supported His cause, loved the good and true, but did not prepare to meet the Bridegroom. God will not leave the world without a witness ; He will send *two*, and they will be incarnated in human flesh ; they will declare the love and justice of God in the midst of the Tribulation. Judging from hints given as to the past record of the two witnesses, they are Moses and Elijah. “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth. . . . And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouths, and devoureth their enemies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. . . . And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and shall kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in

graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another ; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth'' (Rev. xi. 3-10).

Yes, the call of salvation will not be altogether hushed ; but who will seek salvation at such a time ? The well-meaning, honest multitudes who believed in God and the Church, but neglected to get ready and watch. When these fearful events begin, they will cry mightily to God for help and mercy ; they will shake off their lethargy, and awake to the peril—and God will hear them. The unconverted part of the Church, many of them, will join the ranks of the seekers. Salvation will not be beyond the reach of any who will then seek earnestly. " And one of the elders answered and said unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they ? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'' (Rev. vii. 13-14).

6. But parallel with this possibility of salvation, we must not overlook another important feature. While the cry of the lost will be heard, and salvation may be had, all who are saved and come out of the midst of the Tribulation *will seal their salvation in martyrdom !* A condition of hatred toward God will so prevail that any one who dares to call upon His name will lose his life. Martyrdom will be the price of salvation during the Tribulation. The Beast—the Antichrist, which is Satan incarnated in some great

ruler—the Man of Sin—will be master of all the murderous ceremonies. “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Rev. xiii. 15). We shudder, as our mind dwells upon a time that is certainly coming upon the earth, when martyrdom will again be the only way whereby men may be saved from sin. Oh, if men could only know the day of their visitation now, and believe on Him who was, and is, and shall be, so that they may be worthy to miss the darkest midnight of human history. The gloom of any former day will be scarcely a gloaming compared with this.

There is no certain data whereupon we can estimate the exact length of the Tribulation, although many scholars have concluded that it will be forty-five years. This they find in the following Scripture: “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.” Counting the difference in the number of days, from the time “the daily sacrifice shall be taken away,” taking the Bride—the Church—out of the world by His invisible coming, and the “Abomination set up”—the reign of the Antichrist—is forty-five days; and if days here stand for years, as some suppose, it will last forty-five years. Whatever the length may be, it will be shortened, as an act of God’s mercy; otherwise, no flesh could survive those terrible days.

As we contemplate the coming of the Great Tribulation, and the one and only way of escape, it behooves us to examine the foundation of our faith, and see if we be in the faith. All who escape must be blood-washed, with lamps trimmed and burning—*our light must shine*. When He comes as a thief there will be no time for trimming lamps and lighting them. It must be done *now*. “Mother Earth has seen many a dark day; she has listened to many groans of dying; she has heard the tales of awful woes; she has turned a listening ear to the drop, drop, drop of many a bleeding heart, but her darkest days are yet to come; her lightning will be more Satanic, and her thunders will be more diabolical when the great midnight of darkness—the Tribulation—has come.”

“ Earth, what a sorrow lies before thee,
Unlike it in the shadow's past,
The sharpest throes that ever tore thee,
Even though the briefest and the last !
I see the shadows of the sunset,
I see the dread avenger's form,
I see Armageddon's onset,
But I shall be above the storm.
There comes the moaning and the sighing,
There comes the hot tears heavy fall,
The thousand agonies of dying,
But I shall be above them all.”

VIII

THE JEWS—PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

“What advantage hath the Jew? or what profit is there in circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”—*Rom. iii. 1-2.*

“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.”—*2 Cor. iii. 14-16.*

GOD makes no mistake in plans and purposes, whether it be with a nation or an individual. He chose a people in the long ago, when they were surrounded by every phase of pantheistic heathendom. Yet they stood, through all the tragic years, impervious to external influences which threatened to amalgamate their blood or their religion. As has been said: “The Jewish nation was born, delivered, guided, ordered, smitten of the Lord, in order to be God’s age-lasting object lesson in grace and in judgment for all time to come.” Their history, characteristics, achievements, indomitable courage, eccentricities—all are far more thrilling and romantic than any fiction ever written.

An eminent writer has this to say: “Here he is, the imperishable, ubiquitous, irrepressible Jew, the most conspicuous and emphatic figure of all history.

The Jew, without a king or a government of his own, has seen the mightiest empires rise and has attended their funeral. An exile from his own land, he has witnessed every civilized country of the Old World change ownership over and over. No nation has ever prospered in his land—the land that flowed with milk and honey while he dwelt there; he has prospered in every land, under every clime. He receives no hearty welcome, no legislative favors, no social advantages anywhere, hardly justice; but in the race for wealth, for success and for honors in art and science and literature, he leads everywhere. He has been branded with infamy, loaded with unutterable contempt; behold him, the cringing, crouching, unresisting object of pity. But a few brief hours of sunshine, a few decades of emancipation and equal rights, and behold the unbearably proud, and loud, and obnoxious modern Jew!

“Talk of the Egyptian sphinxes and of Gordian knots—the greatest riddle, the one unsolvable mystery of all the ages, is the Jew. His very existence and preservation is an unanswerable challenge to the human mind for a rational explanation.” Truly the Lord said: “Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.” Yet, to-day, the Jew is the “man without a country.” In all lands his name is a synonym for race prejudice, hatred, and contempt. In every way that a people can suffer, he has been the world’s greatest sufferer. Other nations have sinned, died, and passed from the earth; the Jew sinned, but lives and suffers on—losing nothing of those differentiating features, even amid bitterest adversities. The penalty is the chastisement of a son.

“Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his laws. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger” (Isa. xlii. 24-25).

The crisis of it all was seen and felt by the Master, looking from the Mount of Olives upon the city that had rejected Him: “Behold your house is left unto you desolate.” But the world must yet, in a far larger measure, reckon with the Jew.

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a terephim: afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the later days” (Hosea iii. 4-5).

Notwithstanding the heavy affliction resting upon them through the centuries, a brighter day is coming for the children of Abraham; their chastisement and suffering will cease. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

Just as the downfall, dispersion and persecution of Jacob is foretold in prophecy, so the Scriptures abound in promises of a glorious restoration. Many of these promises have been wrested from their true meaning by postmillennialists, as referring to the Church in its glorious triumph in the earth; but if such is the true interpretation, our Bible is full of contradictions and meaningless statements. Hear Isaiah: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the rem-

nant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the isles of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed from the four corners of the earth."

There is no doubt as to what people this Scripture refers. "I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries whither I have driven them" (Jer. xxiii. 3). "They shall enter their folds, and shall increase, they shall be fed by his shepherds, and shall no more fear or be made desolate." "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." A jubilee time is coming, and the people of God who have watched, waited, and mourned at the walls of Jerusalem, have not done so in vain. "A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

"And the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers will be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob" (Isa. xiv. 1). Listen to Isaiah still further on: "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth" (Isa. xliii. 5-6).

Then comes one of the Minor Prophets, sending forth his minor strain of gracious optimism: "And

he said unto him, Run, speak to the young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. ii. 4-5). Again: "Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth." "Behold I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness" (Zech. viii. 3-7-8).

These are all vivid and clear of statement; but it is left for Ezekiel to give us the most striking vision of the coming redemption of the Jews in his vision of "Dry Bones." It is a true picture of what is in store for them. The entire thirty-seventh chapter is a comment on the coming restoration. This Scripture has been often used for modern applications, and truly so; but it is a prophecy of Israel and her redemption. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say to them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11-12). "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their chil-

dren, and their children's children forever, and my servant David shall be a prince over them" (Ezek. xxvii. 25).

These prophecies have not been fulfilled, even remotely; if we assume they mean the Church in this dispensation, the realization of it—viewed by the signs of the times to-day—is as ridiculous as to say they refer to the bringing back the captivity of Babylon. They mean neither; but exactly what they say—the restoration and saving to the land of Canaan—the seed of Abraham.

We shall next notice that the blessings of restoration will not be limited to nationality alone; the blessing will go far deeper than identity as a people who rule over a kingdom. However, the returning to their own land will in no wise mean a deliverance from suffering. They did not know their day of visitation, and for that blunder they have paid dearly—and must yet pay. Terrible suffering awaits them yet; the Great Tribulation will no doubt begin at Jerusalem, and at no time will it cease to be a storm center. The wrathful nations will cluster about the Holy City. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; . . . Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. xiv. 2, 3, 4).

Many believe the Jews will return to their homeland, where they will organize themselves into a nation, under the blessings of God; but they will

still be unconverted and in spiritual darkness, so far as the hand of God is concerned, in shaping their destiny. But when the deep sorrows of the Tribulation sweep down upon their defenseless heads, they will be driven to repentance, and will finally recognize Jesus as their Messiah. From then they will not only be a nation, fashioned as the theocracy of old, but will be a godly people—a royal priesthood. The veil will be removed from their eyes, and they will see. “God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.” The valley of Dry Bones is the whole house of Israel, standing up a mighty army.

“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in” (Isa. xxvi. 1-2).

It will require the horrors of the Tribulation to open the eyes so long blinded. Jeremiah also coincides with Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel when he declares: “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves in him: but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” Also, “For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave their fathers, and they shall possess it.”

“Therefore, fear not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord ; neither be dismayed, O Israel : for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity ; and Jacob shall return, and shall be at rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.” “For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thy wounds, saith the Lord ; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.” “And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Jer. xxx. 3, 7-10, 17, 22).

These marvelous events were revealed unto Moses when delivering his last message to his people, before ascending Mount Nebo. “Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people : for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people” (Deut. xxxii. 43).

The refrain is taken up by Hosea and Joel in the same beautiful accents. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ; but in me is thine help. I will be thy king ; where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities ?” (Hosea xiii. 9, 10). “I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely ; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as dew unto Israel : he shall grow as a lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon” (Hosea xiv. 4, 5). “So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain ; then shall Jerusalem be holy, . . . And it shall come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with water, and a fountain shall

come forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim." "Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse the blood that I have not cleansed ; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion " (Joel iii. 17, 18, 20, 21).

From all these prophecies, we must conclude that the Jews are to have a spiritual as well as a national blessing. "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem : he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel " (Ps. cxlvii. 2). "So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all of the kings of the earth thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory " (Ps. cii. 14-15).

The Gentiles have been the beneficiaries of the Gospel, and free from blinding prejudice ; but they have in a large measure rejected the truth ; but when the veil is removed from the heart of Israel it seems they will as a nation accept the Messiah ; the Jews will be a saved people. "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation : ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory " (Isa. xlv. 17, 25). "Upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness : and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions " (Obad. 17). "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies ; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." "The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy . . . thou shalt see evil no more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not : and to Zion, Let not thy hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is

mighty ; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy " (Zeph. iii. 13, 15-17).

We believe that God has yet a great mission for His ancient people ; once they are redeemed, they will be a great factor in redeeming and restoring all the nations of the earth : " After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down . . . that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called " (Acts xv. 16-17). " Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord in Jerusalem, and shall pray before the Lord. In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you " (Zech. viii. 22-23).

When we consider what the Jews have accomplished in all the world, and in all lines of endeavor—even with their heart veiled as it were—once the glorious light of Christ is upon them they will sweep away out and over all lands, and make the welkin ring with a mighty victorious gospel of salvation for all the world. They shall yet be the handmaiden of the Lord in redeeming the world.

“ On the far reef the breakers
Recoil in shattered foam,
Yet still the sea behind them
Urges its forces home ;
Its chant of triumph surges
Through all the thunderous din—
The waves may break in failure,
But the tide is sure to win.

“ The reef is strong and cruel ;
Upon its jagged wall
One wave—a score—a hundred,
Broken and beaten fall ;
Yet in defeat they conquer,
The sea comes flooding in—
Wave upon wave is routed,
But the tide is sure to win.

“ O mighty sea ! thy message
In clanging spray is cast ;
Within God’s plan of progress
It matters not at last
How wide the shores of evil,
How strong the reefs of sin—
The wave may be defeated,
But the tide is sure to win.”

IX

THE REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

“Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come except there be a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”—*2 Thess. ii. 3-4.*

“ . . . and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast ? who is able to make war with him ? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies ; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them : and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”—*Rev. xiii. 4-7.*

WE now approach the most interesting and yet the most misunderstood phase of this great theme : The Coming and Reign of the Antichrist—The Man of Sin—The Son of Perdition. It is necessary, first, to keep clearly before us the distinction between antichrists, and the Antichrist. There have been antichrists in every age ; John tells us of them in apostolic days. All agencies, whether men or institutions, which oppose or hinder the work of Christ and His Church are antichrists. But we are taught in the Word that all evil of men and things will reach a climax in a great

Personality ; he is to be a man in which all the wisdom, cunning, treachery, rulership, power, and villainies are to be centered. He will combine all the evil powers of the earth which have been scattered and more or less disorganized.

It shall be our purpose to avoid dogmatism concerning this mysterious being. However, he stands out from the pages of both the Old and the New Testament—as to the place he shall occupy, and the sphere over which he shall have dominion—second only to the Son of God Himself. Many good authorities contend that the rule of the Papacy sustains in every particular the prophecies of the Antichrist. But the Papacy is an institution, having as its head popes for every generation, stretching through a period of fifteen or more centuries. A close study of the Scriptures will disclose, properly compiled, an almost detailed biography of this terrible demi-god, which will be a world-ruler rather than a system or institution, such as the Papacy.

The appearing of the Antichrist—that is the time and place of his birth—is a little vague, although some hint is given that his nativity will be somewhere in the Alexandrian kingdoms. “And in the later time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a kind of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up ; and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power : and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and shall practice, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart ” (Dan. viii. 23-25).

We also find a suggestion of a disreputable birth, so that at first he is not given the honors to which he afterwards acquires by deception and fraud. "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honors of the kingdom : but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Dan. xi. 21).

From all we can gather the Antichrist will be a Jew, as they will acclaim him as their Messiah, and he enters into a covenant with them. The pomp and power he displays sustains in every way their conception of what the Messiah should be. But once the power is in his hand the covenant is broken, and promised privileges are withdrawn. This man will be born about the time the Jews are returning to Palestine, or after they are in full possession of their ancient home. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week : and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifices and oblations to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Dan. ix. 27).

From the beginning Satan has attempted to duplicate in every way the plans and achievements of God in His effort to redeem men from sin. Satan's duplicate is always for man's undoing. The Incarnation and Atonement have been the mysterious menace to Satan all along. In the Antichrist, Satan at last will succeed in creating a duplicate for our "God with us" Messiah ; what Jesus was to God and man the "Man of Sin" will be to man and Devil. We would not dare to say that as the Virgin was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost when Christ was conceived so will

Satan come upon the mother of this Man—resulting in a Satanic incarnation—but the inference is very conclusive of that fact: “Son of Perdition,” an Earth-Christ; he becomes the embodiment of the fallen Archangel. All the power, wisdom, and craftiness of Satan will be headed up in this Man. He will be fairer than Absalom to look upon, and wiser than Solomon in his administration; he will tower high above all that was ever born of woman—aside from the Man of Galilee.

“Lo, Manhood has blossomed in Golden Flower,
Perfect in knowledge, and subtle in power,
A man indeed of flesh, blood, and bone
And if such a thing as a Christly throne
Then surely this man could well occupy;
For serenely pleasing to the human eye —
Perfection of intellect, heart and brain,
An Earth-Christ indeed well fitted to reign!”

In the beginning of his career the Antichrist will secure a kingdom—called Babylon—whether actually the land of ancient Babylon, or just as a figure, we are not sure. He will cause a great city to be built, which for wealth and beauty of architecture will be the wonder of the whole world. With this triumph he will begin a world-wide propaganda of himself.

“So Europe went mad at the vast design —
The thought to the head like fiery wine
Came the yellow gold in one vast stream —
Ah, soon it was more than a poet’s dream —
So out of the sun-dried brick and slime
There rose a better than ancient time,
A City that blossomed in golden prime.”

Some Scriptures—such as Jeremiah l. and li., also Isaiah xiii.—seem to sustain the theory of the rebuilding of Babylon. However, we are inclined to think that the city he establishes, and over which he is to rule, will be of such marvelous proportions that the inspired writer uses the glories of ancient Babylon as a type of what the modern Babylon will be. In a number of places he is called the “Assyrian”; therefore, it is impossible to fix his opening reign at any particular country. It seems to be the character of the man and the city set forth, rather than his nativity or the location of the city. We are sure it will be a world-metropolis and the center of civilization, whether in Europe, America, or the Orient. The city may be New York or London, and not destroy the spirit of prophecy. It is a noted fact, however, that a celebrated engineer is now being employed by the Turkish government, and has been for years, cleaning up the ancient site of Old Babylon, removing the débris of centuries from the old canals and viaducts. They propose making the Chaldean plain—which is fertile beyond description—the garden spot of the world; it will be a paradise in a few years. Such a movement in the light of Scripture is significant.

One thing is certain—he will be more than a president, more than a Czar, more than a Cæsar, or Kaiser. From ten kingdoms then in existence he will rise up. “And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground,

and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him was the daily sacrifice taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered" (Dan. viii. 9-12).

By supernatural power and Satanic hate he rules, subdues, and destroys all religious worship. He shouts to the High Priest :

" Take these foul things away —
Your sacrifice and your blood I loathe.
Jah ! is no God—and never let your throat
To him sing praise—as I am God alone —
And seated in Jah's house on jeweled throne
Let your priests come and shout your praise —
Now let your singers glorious anthems raise —
To me, the Lord alone, and only me,
For there be no God higher than I be."

So absolute will be his authority that all commerce and industries must take their license from him on the penalty of death. " And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, and in their foreheads : and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. xiii. 16-17).

" To peoples, to the earth's remotest end,
This message—this command and law I send —
All creatures must acknowledge him as God —
Each creature in the sea, on earthly sod,

The rich, the poor, the bondman and the free,
Must by their words acknowledge him to be
Alone their Lord and God ! who disobey,
The Minister of Wrath shall surely slay.
That all and each may show true loyalty,
Upon the brow or on right hand must be
His royal mark—so when you sell or buy
Display the royal mark to every eye—
And neither buy nor sell but to the one
On whom the royal mark is branded on—
To disbelievers—bread and life deny—
Lo, all who disobey shall surely die ! ”

We see that the Antichrist is called the “Beast” in Revelation ; parallel and coöperative with him there shall be a False Prophet. He will be the religious teacher of that day, and it will be his duty to direct all honor and worship to the Antichrist. There is some conjecture as to this False Prophet, but we believe it can be none other than the Papacy as we see it to-day, and as it has been in all its bloody and soul-deluding career. We are hearing much of late about the overthrow of Romanism, but not one word can be found to sustain such optimism in the Bible. The leading thinkers to-day are moving in the direction of a combined religious propaganda. Now the rulership of the Antichrist will not be alone political, but a religio-political government. The Beast and the False Prophet are united in their world-wide schemes, and their destiny and doom will continue an inseparable union. The Papacy is flourishing to-day as never before since the days of the Reformation. The Man of the Tiber and his minions demand recognition and get it. The Papacy stands

up to-day in the face of history—every page of which is red with human blood and black with loot and lechery—and all enlightenment, claiming a Christly vicarage and abominable assumptions: with what results? kings, presidents, parliaments and congresses, reichsstadts and dumas not only permit it, but foster and protect. The Roman boycott outweighs armies and navies; the world bows at her shrine in deference and submission. There is an alarming revival of papal influences going on, of a daring, determined character, and is no doubt preparing for the co-partnership of the Beast—the Antichrist—which, while these very lines are being written, may be a babe in his mother's arms. From all we can glean in the Scriptures and world movements, both of which are an interpretation of the other, *the hour for the advent of the Antichrist is at hand!* If the world is entering the gloaming of the last days—the “beginnings of sorrows,” “the time of Jacob's trouble,” as many of our greatest religious scholars firmly believe—the Antichrist must soon appear, as he is scheduled to be the ruler—grand potentate—over the carnival of blood in the Great Tribulation!

The reign of the Man of Sin will be of short duration; but language cannot depict its terribleness and magnitude; the world will be devil-possessed and devil-ruled—there will be no interruption until the Son of Man appears in the clouds with His holy angels. Then the Earth-Christ will rally his forces to match steel with the Christ of God at the battle of Armageddon, the result of which will be more fully discussed in a subsequent chapter. The doom of the

Beast and False Prophet is certain ; their despoiling hands will blight and curse the earth no more when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings :

“ And I saw the Beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that had wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the Beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Short but terrible reign. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth who must live during that awful period. To escape this coming day is what we mean by “ fleeing from the wrath to come,” as well as appearing before the Great White Throne in the general judgment.

“ And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change the times and laws : and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But judgment will sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end ” (Dan. vii. 25-26).

X

HIS VISIBLE COMING

“I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them ; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High ; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”—*Dan. vii. 21-22.*

“Behold, he cometh with the clouds ; and every eye shall see him.”—*Rev. i. 7.*

“The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.”—*1 Thess. iv. 16.*

IN the preceding chapters we have been giving a glimpse of the superlative joys and ecstatic experiences of the meeting of the blood-washed saints with their Lord in the air. The Bride and the Bridegroom being sealed in holy nuptials : the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It can be only a glimpse—the real joy, the rapture and the glory of it all are withheld from us ; our wildest conjectures can but realize a faint conception of what it will mean. We have been looking into extremes : the one just mentioned ; the other, the Tribulation horrors, which cannot be described by human tongue or facile pen. For every exultant shout of joy at the Marriage Banquet there is a corresponding wail of suffering and torment here on earth. But the high carnival of wickedness will suddenly be interrupted. We have

looked into the invisible coming and its meaning ; we wish now to examine His visible appearing, and the effect it is sure to have on this dark valley—a devil-cursed world. During the Reign of Terror—since the rapture—evil has known no bounds or limitations ; Satan has been enjoying to his full satisfaction what he has so long and ardently striven for during all the ages of Patriarchal, Prophetic, and Gospel dispensations. He may not fully understand how or why he finds himself in complete control, but his supremacy has been all he desired.

But something new and startling strikes in upon the scenes of unbridled lust and cruelty : it is the appearing of the Son of Man, of God—the Ancient of Days riding upon the clouds in great power and glory. The Banquet Hall closes, and all the holy festivities become a mobilization for the most spectacular campaign and the most remarkable clashing of forces known in earth or heaven. The effect of this appearing on the world is given us in the last shift of the sixth seal : “ And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of his wrath has come ; and who shall be able to stand ? ”

Just as in the First Coming of Jesus—in His humiliation—its full significance and power were not reached until He proclaimed Himself a Saviour, not of the Jews only, but of the whole world—so it

will be in the Second Coming. The full power and meaning will not be known to the world until He appears "in the clouds with great glory." We wish, therefore, to inquire as carefully as the Word reveals the manner of His visible coming, which is not to be circumscribed by nations or continents.

First, He will come in like manner as He went away. On the Mount of Ascension—after the clouds had received Him out of sight—His awestruck disciples stood looking up into heaven, yearning for one more glimpse of their Lord, when an angel stood by them, and said : "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Then, His appearing will be bodily and visibly, so that "every eye shall see him," and all the peoples of the earth shall wail because of Him.

There will be such consternation that the kings will forget their scepters of power ; the generals (chief captains) will forget their rank and authority—privates will look as big to them as another general ; the rich men who have commanded, and the multitudes who have obeyed, will forget their filthy lucre, and how men have bowed to them. Rank, riches and nobility will be blotted out in one overwhelming mêlée ; they will stampede for the rocks and dens of the mountains rather than face Him whom they have despised and rejected. So He will return just as He went away.

Second, He will come with a spectacular revelation ; and while it will be world-wide, it will also be instantaneous. "For as the lightning cometh out of

the east, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be'' (Matt. xxiv. 27). When we consider the significance of such a statement, in that the lightning will travel around the world—twenty-five thousand miles, seven times in one minute—we can appreciate how it will strike terror to all of them that dwell on the earth, regardless of rank or station. All this may read like some wild fairy tale, or Jules Verne fiction ; but it is truth, and truth is always stranger than any fiction conceived in the brain of man. To spiritualize the clear-cut, unmistakable statements of the word relative to this subject is to reduce the Bible to a book of absurdities. If this must be spiritualized and interpreted as figurative, what part of the Bible *does mean exactly what it says?* If part is figure—we mean when it is stated for fact—why not all? Some is told in parable ; but when so, it is indicated. No, these are events that are sure to take place, and possibly during the life of some who will read these lines. As we pen this strange description the skies may be all in excitement preparing for the tremendous event.

Third, He will come bringing His saints and holy angels with Him. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all nations." We have the promise by the words of Paul that after the meeting in the air we shall ever be with the Lord. So, if language can be understood, He will bring with Him millions of resurrected saints, and shining angels. If we will dwell a moment on such a spectacle : the

Son of God blazing with the glory of a noonday sun, flashing and glittering ; the hosts, shouting with the voice of an archangel and with the trump of God, echoing and reverberating to the ends of the earth, the truth ought to impress the most obstinate. Any little demonstration of the heavenly bodies will cause more or less consternation and fear.

About forty-five years ago there occurred a total eclipse of the sun, visible in the United States. The gloom began about two o'clock in the afternoon, and by three the sun disk was completely covered ; the cattle lay down, and the chickens went to roost. Those who did not know what was going on were overwhelmed with fear. Men and women who were never known to pray did so then, and publicly—not caring who saw them on their knees. But when He shall come with a scene, such as we have indicated, the world will be paralyzed—"all the nations will mourn because of Him." Even after the invisible coming and the rapture the world will be so engrossed in sin, and so blinded by selfishness and bestiality, that the knowledge of Christ, and God's dealings so obscured, their names will be known only in connection with mockery and ridicule. The power of the Antichrist will be so absolute that those who seek and find Him will be destroyed at once. It will be the spirit of Haman, who eagerly sought to kill a whole nation because one man refused to do him obeisance. But when He appears in the skies, marshalling the battalions of holy beings, the falling rocks and the tumbling mountains will be welcomed ; but the rocks and the mountains will not obey. They will have to face Him in that reckoning day—

Dies Iræ—Dies Iræ to the world that has forgotten Him.

Fourth, He will come with the clouds as chariots—actually riding on the sweeping, rolling vapors of the cloudland. What is so beautiful a sight as to witness the upper strata of clouds being borne on the wings of a storm? Add to this spectacle the Lord and His shining hosts riding on them, within full view of all the multitudes of earth. This appearing may occur at midnight, but His presence will make it as light as day. We shall not need the sun or the moon, for the “Light of the world” will illuminate every dark, obscure corner. However, we must keep in mind that His visible coming is not the event for which we are called upon to watch; we are to watch for His coming *as a thief*. Only those who are left behind and have survived the horrors of the Tribulation will witness His coming on the clouds with His angels. There will be none to rejoice as the skies open at that tremendous hour; all who are here to witness it will be the vilest of the vile. Who are they? “The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and the murderers, and the whoremongers, and the sorcerers, and the idolaters, and all liars.” The consternation will be universal. The one hundred and forty and four thousand who find Christ during the Tribulation will have been martyred; they will escape being present when the Dies Iræ comes.

We wish here to observe the remarkable contrast in the First and Second Coming of our Lord; then it was in obscurity and humility; a poor unsophisticated maiden was chosen as the human mother of

heaven's Prince. He descended to the mud-sill of society ; He went to the bottom, as it were. Notwithstanding the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost at the Incarnation, from an earthly view-point it carried the stigma of disgrace and *illegitimacy*. Think of it, our Lord must wear the stamp of shame, even before He opened His eyes upon the world He came to redeem. His mother, the holiest and most exalted woman of the race, must feel the pangs of slanderous criticism as she serves the highest function of heaven's commission. Yes, He came in lowliness, poverty, obscurity and disgrace ! He lived an exile ; there was no room for Him ; no pallet of comfort for her who gave Him birth ; no shelter but a stall where dumb oxen fed. Society rejected Him ; His Church—*His own Church*—rejected Him ; the world rejected Him, and, as a climax, the world executed Him publicly as a murderous criminal. His execution was the most degraded method known to that cruel age. "Ignominious cross," exclaims Paul. Only the basest criminals were crucified. Thus it was when He came first.

But "He that descended is the same also that ascended, up far above all heavens ;" "Him hath God highly exalted, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess." After going to the lowest depths, He ascended to the highest heights ; He is reëstablished in the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Now, in the full insignia of this heavenly glory, He will come again "to judge the quick and the dead." His Second Coming will be an extreme contrast from His First ; He came poorer than the poorest ; He will

come next as the King of kings, and Lord of lords. When here He was the Good Shepherd for all the hungry, sin-sick souls; to-day He is the Great Shepherd in that His salvation can reach down and lift up the most hopeless sinner; when He returns again, He will be the Chief Shepherd—thank God.

The most exalted privilege known to earth or heaven is not to have our raptured soul translated to “the far-away home of the soul,” walk golden streets, and sit in the shade of the Tree of Life by the river flowing out from the throne of God. Oh, no; the real honors awaiting redeemed men and women is to be caught away—having a part in the first resurrection, or changed in a moment—being a part of the Holy Bride, and then enjoy the celebration of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Then, after that, come with Him in the clouds to possess and rule and redeem the world from the curse and bondage of sin. A mansion, a crown, a street of gold, are all beautiful; they enflame the soul with holy expectancy; but these cannot compare to the honor of being numbered with those whom He will bring with Him as He opens the skies, rides out on the clouds—harnessed to the winds—which will be when He breaks in upon the world at His “glorious appearing.”

Dear reader, the greatest calamity of which the sacred Book tells us is to be lost in sin, and left to the Tribulation, and perchance face Him, when He comes in the clouds. The greatest honor that can come to a redeemed soul will be to have a part in the rapture, and then reign with Him on His throne—here in this world. Amen!

- “ This the rest 'mid earthly turmoil,
This the balm 'mid all its pain,
This the joy amid our sorrow,
Christ is coming back again ;
Coming surely, coming quickly,
It is but a little while
Till we hear His voice so tender,
Till we see His welcome smile.
- “ He will hush earth's tribulation,
He will make her wars to cease,
Bring in everlasting justice,
Bring in everlasting peace ;
It is not for death we're waiting,
But for Him who then will bring
Life and health and joy and blessing,
Earth's exalted, holy King.
- “ Tho' the world's long night grows darker,
And His coming seems so late,
Soon will be a glorious dawning,
Let us then with patience wait ;
We are longing, we are listening,
For His coming from afar,
Oh, how we shall love to greet Him,
Christ, our bright and Morning Star.”

XI

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”—*Rev. xvi. 13-14, 16.*

THERE is much conjecture as to the when, where, and what concerning the battle of Armageddon. Many believe it to be only a figure of speech, symbolizing the contending forces of good and evil—light and darkness in continuous antagonism. Considerable comment of late has been made by writers, relative to the present war, which has brought this mysterious name out as never before. Aside from the serious suggestions involved, it is a catchy rhetorical phrase, and is often employed by orators to add spice to their eloquence. One national figure used it to illustrate the principles of his party in their conflict against the powers of plutocracy and spoils system ; his fight against wrong was to be the battle of Armageddon.

The present war has resurrected the word, and it is now on the lips of many who never thought of it before : churchmen, lecturers, editors, and men with no Bible knowledge are thinking and wondering ; the super-

ficial student, knowing that mention is made of such a battle, is now asking : "What does it all mean?"

Connecting this future conflict with any principle or cause, or with the present war, as being the fulfillment of the Armageddon prophecy, reveals a superficial knowledge of history, as viewed from a Bible standpoint, or of the term itself. It is a Bible term, and should never be used except with a sacred or prophetic meaning. It is never found in classic literature, and should never be used aside from sacred connections.

Armageddon is not a myth—neither in its past, or whatever may transpire in the future. It is a place, and can be located as definitely as New York or London ; it is the most noted battle-field of the Old Testament—in fact, it is the world's Waterloo. Barak won a victory over the Canaanites ; Gideon over the Midianites ; Saul fought his last battle here and was slain ; Josiah fought and died here by the Egyptian invasion ; the battles of Gilboa and Megiddo were fought here. Judas Maccabeus conquered the heathen here. From the days of the Assyrian and Egyptian wars Armageddon has been a famous battle-field. Napoleon in his eastern campaign fought his leading battle here. It is identified by a mountain rising up from the plain of Esdraelon, and the entire plain is the ancient stage of more than a score of great battles ; but they say Jerusalem is the strategic point, and must be on the old battleground.

We are not especially interested in the Armageddon of the past, but we are now inquiring as to what will take place in the evening of this dispensation—the battle yet to be fought. One thing is certain : the

present war is not the prophetic Armageddon ; the theater of that conflict will not center around Berlin, London, Paris, Petrograd, or Constantinople, but Jerusalem. As yet, the plan of prophecy has not developed, relative to this war, where it must occur.

We wish to keep in mind that when the battle line is cast for Armageddon, the earth will be ruled by the Antichrist, with all his ingenious and iniquitous power. There have been absolute monarchies before, but in comparison with this one they are mere puppets. Then the Jews will be in possession of their ancient Canaan ; the Abrahamic inheritance will have been restored. Terrible persecution will befall them under the tyrannical rule of the Man of Sin, but they will be dwelling under their own vine and fig tree.

In this war the nations are contending each with the other—they are angry ; but in the final Armageddon the nations will be banded together under one ruler—the world Monarch. There will be no Kaiser, Czar, King or President figuring then ; on the one side will be the King of kings with His heavenly hosts and the Holy Bride ; on the other side will be the depraved nations, lashed to fury by Satan-incarnated leadership. It will be a fight for world supremacy. There are many contesting crowns to-day ; there will be but one ; Armageddon will decide who shall wear it—Christ or the Antichrist. Terrible as human war is, it is all human ; this one will be allied with the superhuman. While it will be the *nations*, they will be led by a God-defying, devil-incarnated Man ; one who is the personification of Satan, endowed with all his hellish ingenuity. This superhuman leader will meet in battle array the forces of Jesus, who will

descend with Him from the clouds, according to the Scriptures. They will be fresh from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb ; the dew of heaven will be on their brows. Angels will be scouting about the ramparts ; resurrected saints will form the battalions for action around the Holy City. The artillery will be the fire of divine wrath, proceeding from the presence of Him who comes to wrest the scepter of universal empire from the usurper Prince ; and His presence will consume, as it were, the allied nations and their Leader.

Armageddon will be the first religious war ; we have had religious wars, but not in the sense this one will be. It will not be according to this world's ideas of religion ; there will be no Catholics, no Protestants, no Mohammedans, and no Jews, while all these will be engaged, but not for the individual interests of either.

The question of commercial, naval, or territorial supremacy will not be involved ; but, as before stated, on the earth side it will be to *dethrone God's Son*, and eliminate His rule in the world. David saw this mighty conflict when writing the second Psalm : "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Paul also saw it by revelation, when he wrote of the Antichrist : "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped ; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

This battle will mark the end of that mysterious being, in whom Satan enters, as the substitute for the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Just as Satan retained all his mighty power as a fallen archangel, so the

Man of Sin will possess all the superior powers and endowments of Satan. All the genius of statesmanship and military craft will be brought to bear on the climax of his career ; his full stature will be exhibited in the trenches of Esdraelon.

This day, and all the years to the closing of this age, is preëminently "Man's Day" ; all the thought and purpose of civilization is an effort to deify man and what he has accomplished. Man's Day will head up and reach its zenith in the one Man rule, and when the Son Himself appears, the world will be thrown into paralysis and confusion ; it will be the closing scene of the Tribulation. The entente of hell will be broken through the glorious victory of the Captain of our Salvation.

It is idle talk to speak of the present war in Europe as the Armageddon of prophecy. There is nothing which takes precedence over the coming of Jesus as a *thief* for His Bride—it is due at any moment He chooses to come ; but many things must of necessity take place before the battalions of earth and heaven are gathered to battle in the "day of God Almighty." If we are entering the Tribulation, as many believe, fearful, unspeakable, and overwhelming events must mobilize in rapid succession if the world-wide war even begins to drift in that direction. The close of Armageddon will usher in the greatest event in the schedule of God's plans—we speak this with reverence and humility of heart—it is the beginning of the personal reign of Jesus Christ on earth. It is the Lord's battle and His victory, and the spoils of war shall be the whole world given over to Him, its rightful owner. "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against

those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. . . . And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ; . . . And the Lord shall be king over the whole earth : in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. . . . And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction ; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited " (excerpts from Zechariah, fourteenth chapter). We find that the Bible is just as explicit as to who will fight, and where it shall be fought, and who shall win, as any fact in history or prophecy.

The poet gives us an insight to the schemes of the Antichrist :

" And then his heart conceived a wondrous thing —
 He would show Jah, the Man, he was a king.
 Lo, armed millions should fight men as foes,
 While in more dark and deadly, awful close,
 The Demons should meet angels in their hate,
 Then Wrong or Right be driven to its fate —
 And so Jehovah challenged to a fight !
 Yea, let Christ and His Angels come to sight —
 Then such a war as never yet beheld
 Undreamed of e'en by Satan in far eld —
 Exterminating war, and that alone,
 'Twixt himself and the Christ, for the world's throne —
 While Satan and Jehovah for the rest —
 So let their strength decide who was the best.
 So over Europe ran his battle cry —
 All quickly Europe made its mad reply :

To Arms ! To Arms ! The Flower of Europe's Race !
Lo, Palestine the first grand meeting place !'
Lo, Satan sent his messengers abroad,
Deceiving with their lying and base fraud,
Telling the Human, that the glorious hour
Was near the dawn when Lucifer's Great Power
Would crush Jehovah in a fatal close !
Jehovah and His Angels, men's fell foes,
Be driven to grim disaster and defeat ;
In a short time Demons and Angels meet.
To Arms ! To Arms ! from heart to lip it ran —
Europe became as if a single man
Stood for the nations—with a heart of fire
Obeying Lucifer the sole desire,
Making his cause o'er everything supreme,
From factory, store, and farm, flowed out one stream
Of fiery furies with one end in sight —
To aid Prince Satan in this nearing fight."

We concede a bare possibility that the present theater of war may shift to the Orient, and events may shape themselves rapidly toward these strange and terrible climaxes. Already Turkey is figuring conspicuously ; as a nation she is doomed. Very soon she will tread down Jerusalem no more. These are ominous times, and we may be entering the world's total eclipse of darkness and bloodshed. If so, His coming *as a thief* may be expected daily—*hourly*. All the movements seem to point to but one direction : *the closing of the Gentile Age*. Such facts and meditations should fill us with new zeal and holy patriotism. Those who would be on the winning side at Armageddon, and stand with Him on the Mount of Olives, must be blood-washed and ready.

XII

WHAT WILL HE DO?

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan.”—*Rev. xx. 1-2.*

“And I heard a voice as it were of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings, saying: Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”—*Rev. xix. 6.*

“Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.”—*Rev. xxii. 12.*

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.”—*Matt. v. 5.*

OUR discussion now brings us to an important question: What will Jesus do when He returns to this earth? At every step of God's dealings with the world, and especially when dealing through His Son, the propaganda has been met at every point of the compass by the one Rival and Enemy: the fallen archangel, Lucifer, the Prince of darkness. Before the Master could carry out any plan, He must first vanquish and eliminate the “blockade,” as that is the literal meaning of Devil.

When an infant in swaddling clothes, before He was old enough to take to the home in Nazareth, a scheme was put in operation whereby He should be destroyed, so that the Incarnation would fail, and

the Atonement become abortive. Then when He appears in the world-arena—after baptism—He must meet and conquer the Devil in the wilderness. When He opened the Gospel for human redemption in His home synagogue, an unseen Foe stirred His friends and neighbors of a lifetime into a murderous mob. Every inch of ground occupied by the Apostolic Church, from the Crucifixion unto the present hour, has been bitterly contested by this fallen Prince.

When He comes secretly for His Bride Rapture, to participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, He must first dethrone Satan from his seat of power in the skies, and cast him into the earth. When He comes “in the clouds and great glory,” He must literally fight—yes, that is what we have learned the Battle of Armageddon will be ; He must fight before He can possess the world which is His by creation and redemption. The Battle of Armageddon will be the Waterloo of the Antichrist, who is none other than a *monstrosity*—very man and very Devil. Just as Jesus is very man and very God—so he will be a similar incarnation of Satan in human form. At the close of a great battle it is understood that the war is not over, or victory complete, until the commanding officer surrenders, or is captured. That is exactly what will take place when the smoke of battle is cleared away in the valley of Esdraelon. Jesus Christ will cause the arrest of Satan by the great High Sheriff of heaven. When the angel “lays hold” of the dragon—and Satan, called the Devil—the word literally means *arrest*, as an officer arrests a criminal and places handcuffs upon him ; so the angel will bind Satan with a great chain.

It was a great day for Tennessee when John A. Murrell, the outlaw, was arrested. His gang scattered and were seen no more ; it was a great day for the land when Jesse James, the most noted outlaw since the days of Captain Kidd, was killed. The very night of the day he was assassinated his plans were laid to rob a bank, and perhaps kill some one. His death put an end to outlawry in the Middle West. It is going to be a jubilee hour when Satan—the arch-enemy of God, His Son, and the whole race—is put in chains ; he who for six millenniums has filled the earth with bloodshed and sorrow. No mind but that of a fallen archangel could have invented the Rum Traffic, the White Slave Traffic, Plutocracy, Militarism, and Juggernaut Commercialism—all of which have murdered, crushed, blighted, and damned the millions of helpless people. He is responsible for it all—he is the god of this world ; but his end is certain. The present internecine war has been truly called the “Devil’s War,” and so it is. All wars are his at some point of the angle ; he forces it from one side or the other—even though the issue is a righteous cause, and righteous men are engaged in it. The first thing Jesus will do when He comes back will be to get rid of His old Enemy ; and that Enemy will trouble the world no more ; his prison will be the bottomless abyss for a thousand years.

Next, He will proclaim Himself King of kings, and Lord of lords ; this truth will be shouted from heaven, and His holy messengers will take up the refrain, and carry the news to the uttermost parts of the earth. Just as in ancient times a new king

was installed by the proclamation of shouts and the blowing of trumpets, so will be His inauguration. Every nook and corner will hear it thereof.

John said, "I saw a Lamb on Mount Zion"; yes, His feet will press again the very spot where He wept over Jerusalem, so sacred in history; but doubly so now by His presence. He will sit on the ancient throne of David, of which that glorious reign will be but a shadow of the one now beginning.

When this Coronation takes place there will be no rival powers working their intrigue; the kings, Cæsars, Czars, Kaisers, and presidents must relinquish all authority. They will flee from His presence, and hide in the dens and rocks of the mountains. This new administration will be so remarkable, so unlike anything ever known in the earth before, that it will not interrupt our line of thinking to pause long enough to contrast His humiliation—a Man despised and rejected of men—and His coming now as the Supreme Ruler.

When here as a man among men, He came in obscurity and disgrace—as His parentage was questioned; He came in lowliness and poverty. No room for Him anywhere. From the Manger to the Cross He was ostracized from all society except the most humble—He was rejected by His very own: "they received him not." He was a lonely sufferer, with no place of His own to lay down to sleep at night—and not even a sepulcher in death. But when He returns it will be with pomp, power, glory, and splendor. In the affairs of men He rules nowhere to-day; then He will rule everywhere; in His hand will be the scepter of universal empire.

The dazzling pageantry of earthly kings will be lusterless in comparison with the display of His royal ceremonies.

Again, when He came the first time, it was to institute a movement for the regeneration of men. He exhorted and preached in the highways and by-ways, that men should repent and give up sin ; He begged men to be reconciled to God. When He went away the Spirit came to carry forward the Gospel—and the heart of that Gospel was and is a call for men to separate themselves from sin and live holy. There was no enforcing these mandates ; it was always in an attitude of appeal : “ Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open unto me, etc.” Not one divine statute did He ever coerce men to obey. But when He becomes the Supreme Dictator of this world His commandments, precepts, and standards will be enforced. He now exhorts men to be holy ; He will then demand holiness of men. “ The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.”

Still another contrast may be noticed : when He came before, He went about doing good—feeding the hungry, blessing the poor and helpless. As a reward for this ministry of love and service and sacrifice, and as recognition of His Kingship in the earth, a crown of thorns was pressed upon His brow. This crown platted so that each of the seventy-five poison thorns pointed inward, burying their dead points into His quivering flesh. Then it will be a crown denoting absolute monarchy. Human rulership has failed ; and just now He is allowing this world to see how utterly incapable it is of self-government. We have

rejected Him, and established our own parliaments of brotherhood. He cried over the Holy City, as it strutted in its pride and conceit ; He saw its helplessness and doom, but was not allowed to give the remedy. In His day men will be compelled to hear His voice and obey. He did nothing before, except in the hearts of the few who yielded to Him, and followed Him in the way ; then He can and will do all things according to His own standards. Thank God for the contrast.

The next move in this sublime enterprise will be to establish a joint rulership in the earth. All our lives we have been reading such Scriptures as : "Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth." "Know ye not that the righteous shall inherit the earth." "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." We have read about being an heir and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Paul said he was going to reign with Christ, because he had suffered with Him. Now all these statements mean something, or they mean nothing ; they mean, dear reader, exactly what they say. Think a moment ; try to imagine all these promises as a time after we get to heaven—the future home of the soul. It is nothing less than absurd. None of these Scriptures have any reference to heaven, but to the *earth*. God the Father will be all the light, power, glory,

and authority in the blessed realm above ; but that time is not yet. When the Book talks of the earth, it cannot mean heaven. John saw who the souls were that sat on the *thrones* : they were the martyrs for Jesus ; they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Heaven is to be an eternal abode ; the Millennial Administration will have an end. No, indeed, God is not going to allow the Devil to rule this world through all the centuries, and finally see it go down at last in a fearful crash, morally, socially, and politically—and that is just what it is doing at this time *rapidly*. God will not give up the fight, and take His faithful ones away, and place them in heaven. Such would be nothing less than Satanic victory from first to last. Unthinkable ! God has here and there matched the schemes of Satan, and overruled them for good ; but no one can read the history of the human race from Adam down to the Hohenzollern Kaiser and not be convinced that Satan has gotten the lion's share of every deal so far. The Bible acknowledges this strange fact—the optimistic prophets to the contrary notwithstanding. But it shall not be so always ; God has spoken about this other side of the proposition also. Devil rule is swiftly drawing to a spectacular ending.

This joint rulership will be a system of judgment, with Jesus Christ as the Supreme Judge of the earth. Observe, judgment does not mean necessarily a trial for conviction, as will be the fate of the sinner in the end, or a criminal being tried, looking to a penalty ; but judgment is to be as when God ruled the land by His chosen judges. Our judges are not appointed alone to try criminals, but to administer justice, ex-

pound the law, etc. Christ will judge this world in righteousness and true holiness ; He will judge it in equity, says the Psalmist. The trouble in the land to-day is that justice is almost unknown because of the fraud and dishonesty of courts and juries. Places of authority are in the hands of corrupt, vile men ; men without a thought of patriotic duty, who have gotten their offices by boodle and falsehood. Nearly all the machinery of this world is run for personal aggrandizement. Corporations and evil-doers are in league with ambitious politicians—and the people mourn. The régime of evil will be displaced by one of justice and honor.

Then, lastly, the Master will reward His servants. In all the marvelous promises in the Word nothing is said about rewards in this dispensation, aside from the glorious consciousness of being right with God and self. He who expects a reward here, and works to that end, will most likely get it ; but it will not be given by Him. He promises us nothing for the present, measured by the rewards of this world ; it is self-denial, suffering, persecution, sacrifice, and death. He speaks of a class of men who get their reward—and that reward is the praise of men ; but it is not His praise. Christ is not in league with the machinery of men and things, such as worldly promotions, honors, etc. ; they are not a part of His rewards. He blesses men in temporal affairs, certainly ; but He promises to reward no one until He returns. “ Behold I come, and my reward is with me.”

We must keep in mind that all this does not mean to die and go to heaven ; but it is a reward *here*.

The parable of the talents teaches us that lesson. The reward will be according to our several ability : one city, ten cities, countries, etc. Does He not say we shall sit with Him on His throne, as He sat with His Father on His throne? Let us examine more closely what our rewards will be : “ I saw thrones,” says John. Then the *first installment* of our reward will be a *crown*. “ There is laid up for me a crown,” says Paul, “ which Christ the Righteous Judge shall give me in that day, and not to me only, but all who love his appearing.” Oh, how much sentimental poetry and music has been enjoyed, telling us about getting to heaven, and wearing a crown ; yes, and playing a harp, also. Somehow, the harp and crown have been associated together. Beautiful, but absolutely silly and meaningless. What is a crown, and what does it stand for? Not an ornament—oh, no ; imagine the million of redeemed saints, all on dress parade in heaven, wearing crowns ! Dear reader, a crown is a badge of kingship, rulership, authority. When earthly kings and queens lose their crowns, they lose their authority to rule. It is not the crown they lose that hurts ; but it is the power they lose. Mary Queen of Scots could have carried her crown away with her to the island prison ; but she had no need of it, so long as she had been dethroned.

A joint rulership in the earth will mean a crown given to those who are worthy, and they will be placed in authority over the earth ; and this authority will be delegated by the Lord Himself. A crown means nothing unless it carries with it power to rule. The English crown means the king or queen is the

head ruler of all the English people and foreign territory. The crown of glory, righteousness, rejoicing, etc., will mean authority to rule with Jesus Christ as the head over all principalities.

The *second installment* of reward will be the privilege and honor of coöperating with Christ in redeeming this world from the curse that has rested on it from the beginning, on account of sin. Is it not an honor to have our President call men from their places of business to join him in ruling this great nation? What greater honor than to be selected as a member of his cabinet—coöperating with the chief executive in dealing with all the problems of the day. Our reward will be helping Him bring back this sin-cursed planet to what it was in the beginning—a Paradise. We wonder sometimes—what about the Millennium? Here you have it: the reign of Christ and His faithful ones in the restoration of the earth. The Bible says the “restoration of all things” is coming, and we believe it. It will be done in the Millennium by the wise and righteous rulership of the Son of God, in coöperation with His saints. He will place those whom He desires over every nook and corner of the whole earth, so there will not be a single slip of justice or unrighteous dealing anywhere. Countries, cities, towns, villages will be cared for; evil systems, inequalities, injustice, and oppression will forever cease. And, thank God, there will be no Devil to hinder or make afraid.

An old legend will serve as an illustration—touching our relation to Christ in this present Church Age, or gospel dispensation. A crown prince desired to seek a wife; but knowing that he could have any

princess of his own realm, or any other for the asking, he was not satisfied; he wanted to woo and win a girl who would love him for his own sake, and not for his coming crown. He envied the boy who could woo and win a sweetheart. As it was, he would never know surely that his queen would love him. Dressing himself in the garb of a peasant, he traveled far away over hills and valleys, seeking employment. Finally he hired out to a prosperous yeoman, in a remote part of his father's kingdom, who had a beautiful daughter. During his labors around the place they met, and she soon discovered that he was no ordinary character; they became acquainted, and interested. But he was always their "hired man." When the father discovered that his daughter was becoming interested in the hired servant, he positively forbade further relations on the penalty of discharge. It was then too late; they were in love, and had secret meetings nightly. The time came when matters must be settled. She must decide between her comfortable home and the man she loved. He would not allow her to get away from the fact that he was a poor man, with nothing but a strong arm, and a heart full of love. She grew more and more determined that her fate was inseparably bound to him. He urged her to think well before she made her final choice. At last she announced that her mind was settled, and that she was ready to cast her lot with him, for better or for worse. When the midnight hour arrived, he placed a ladder up to her window, and, alone in the darkness, she took his hand as her only hope and protection. The miles were long, the hours dragged heavily. He left her to rest

while he went to a station near by, of which he knew. Arousing the sleepy watchman, he ordered him to send a dispatch at once to the king, telling him to send the royal chariot to a certain place, and have it there by daylight; bring also some of his royal garments. They renewed the tiresome journey, and just as the light began to dawn in the east they walked wearily into the village. Awaiting them was the king's chariot in plumed array. Turning to his lover, the prince of blood said: "My dear, inasmuch as you took me in my poverty and obscurity—loved me for my own sake—I now say to you, you are to be the queen of this great country; I am the crown prince, and you are to be my very own; step into the royal chariot, and we will finish the journey."

So must it be to those who expect to have a part in the great times that are surely coming. He can offer you nothing now but the same treatment He received; but by and by, when He comes again, "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard the things God hath appointed for them who love him."

XIII

THE EARTH'S CURSE

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it : cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.”—*Gen. iii. 17-19.*

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”—*Rom. viii. 22.*

THE poets have sung beautiful songs about the world—its hills, valleys, and babbling brooks, and truthfully ; as the primeval forests and rolling plains look, it seems as if nature had exhausted her resources of skill to make things attractive and wholesome. But from the day the flaming sword shut man out of the Garden, he has waged an unceasing warfare against a *curse*—one that God placed on the world because of his transgression. Truly has man eaten bread by the sweat of his face. He who tills the soil must overcome the curse or starve. This condition is not an accident ; it dates from the “Adamic Fall.” In the beginning it was not so ; but the world was a paradise : food, fruits, and flowers in abundance and perfection.

God saw all that He had made, that it was good ; beautiful to look upon, and in perfect peace and har-

mony. The dove cooed to her mate without the fear of an approaching hawk or eagle ; the lambs skipped on the hillsides without fear of wolves. All the animal kingdom marched quietly before Adam, and as they did so, he gave to each a name. It was indeed a good world. But he who was honored with having dominion over all the works of God's hand *transgressed*—sinned against his beneficent Creator ; he forfeited his residence in the Garden, and was driven out into Eden, which was all the country stretching to the west, and upon Eden he found a curse on everything.

First, let us notice the soil from which man must gain his food. Take the virgin forest or plain, where no vegetation ever grew, except the trees and wild grass. When the timber is cleared away, or the sod broken, preparatory to planting of seed, there will at once spring up every variety of vile, stinking weeds and thorny nettles. Cut them down and they grow again as abundantly as before. Leave the good seed to contend with the foul soil, and their growth will be impossible ; nothing can compete with the *curse*, without the most diligent labor. If a tract of ground, which for years has been under good cultivation, is allowed to remain idle for a season, millions of sturdy weeds and briars will occupy every inch of the soil. Where did the seed of all this foul growth come from ? The soil is exactly like the depraved nature of the *human heart*—it is *unclean*. If the heart is allowed to remain uncultivated it will bring forth every sin in the Decalogue, and often it does that under the very best environments.

Let us take another aspect of the soil : the curse is

manifested in the continual wearing out and impoverishment of the ground. "The earth will wax old, as doth a garment." Note the strength of this figure: a garment shows its wear and tear from the first time it is worn. The soil is exactly the same way: two crops cannot be grown on the same spot—all things being equal—with the same abundance. Oh, sometimes this may not be noticed for years, but it wears out. The soil must be changed, rested with other kinds of grain, or fertilized, or the wearing shows very soon. Land that has been cultivated for twenty-five years must be supplied with fertilizer, or no crop can be grown worth while. So true—it waxeth old, as doth a garment. But, observe, it never becomes too old and worn to grow the dregs of the *curse*. The variety of weeds, thistles, and thorns spring up spontaneously from the worn-out, as well as the virgin soil.

Then, the curse is further evidenced by the multi-form destructiveness of fruits and vegetables. After contending and conquering the foul soil, the battle is scarcely begun; the fight is then with scale, blight, insects, caterpillars, moths, cut-worms, army-worms, boll weevil, flies, bugs, etc.; these pests gnaw the roots and bark, sting the buds, lay their eggs in the ground and in the bark, so that when they hatch, an army of crawlers begin to eat away every leaf and bud; other eggs will be deposited in the young bloom, that when they hatch, a worm will bore into the heart of the apple, peach or plum, and nearly all varieties of fruit. Other insects will sting the young limbs, until they dry up and die. Thus it is, through all the fruit, vegetable, and cereal kingdom—the

farmer and fruit grower can never be sure that his labors will be rewarded until the harvest is gathered.

When we have battled with the soil and the pests for our food supply, and, perchance, conquered them—we are not yet through. From January to January, in many sections of the earth, the hazard of freezings, which kill the fruits in embryo, is never removed; then floods often prevent seed time—then afterwards destroy the harvest; droughts parch and burn them up in midsummer; early frosts nip garden and field before maturity. Again, dear reader, these things are not so by accident, but the fulfillment of a prophetic penalty spoken by the Lord when sin entered the moral world. God cursed the ground for man's sake, and he is the principal sufferer.

These things give us a lurid conception of God's attitude to sin, even if the curse ended with the ground—but it did not; all the kingdoms of creation received the same dreadful blight.

Having examined the curse as it affects the soil and vegetation, we shall next examine it as touching the higher orders of creation—the animal kingdom. A close study of Edenic conditions, prior to the Fall, we find that man was placed in supreme dominion over all. Observe, there is not one single order or species of animal life now that did not exist then; all of which roamed peacefully and with plenty in the Garden, and especially in Eden. No new orders have come into being since God finished His labors—creation closed.

Now remember that all the animal kingdom was made to pass before Adam, proving, beyond a doubt,

that they were neither "wild," nor savage. The fox, the elephant, and the tiger, were as docile as our domestic animals and household pets. What about the conditions prevailing among the beasts of field and forest since? They are *beasts of prey*; an eternal warfare is waged among them, killing and devouring each other. All the smaller, weaker ones must run or hide for their lives. It is a survival of the fittest; the lion springs upon the deer and tears it to pieces; the wolf will chase and kill a whole flock of sheep if unprotected. The hyena is never tamed; he will dig into a grave and gnaw at a decomposed body. There is not an exception; every animal that is not vicious, seeking to kill and eat whatever it may find, is *wild*, and can be tamed only by being caught when young; and then, if they hear the "call of the wild," will go back into the old life.

All that may be said about the beasts of earth may also be said of the fowls of the air; the same cruel, vicious propensities prevail among them. They are all wild, and many of them are as fierce as the tiger. The hawk tears the flesh from the breast of the dove; the eagle swoops down upon the lamb and carries it away to be shredded for her younglings. But for the broad domain of forest and field many species of bird life would soon become extinct. What we find among the beasts and birds is also to be found among the swarming finny tribes of the water; cannibalism exists in river and sea. The same war is waged there; the larger ones devour the smaller with tigerish delight. The game trout and bass—so delightful to catch—are as cruel as the man-eating Bengali of India.

A still further manifestation of the curse is seen in the multitude of diseases which prey upon the beasts, birds, and fishes; they too must fight parasites, germs, and sickness; cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, and poultry must be guarded and doctored continually; the wonder is that any of them live—so we are taught by experts on these lines. But for the instinct of self-preservation and remedies taught them by Nature they could not survive. Truly, the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain; the curse abounds in all life.

Another strange fact: every creature, big or little, regards man as an enemy, and he whom God intended should have peaceful dominion over all life does so now only by force; they flee from his presence, or rush upon him to rend him limb from limb. Only by the most cunning and difficult methods can man master the lower orders of life. Yes, the creature will not risk man, but fears him. Man, too, must be on guard continually: the serpent strikes him in the grass; the insects swarm about him to poison with their sting; the varmints visit his poultry yard, and the wolves destroy his sheep; the rodents and insects make havoc of his garden and flower beds. All of them know instinctively they must flee or hide for their lives when man appears.

But the catalogue is not yet complete; man himself is a survival of the fittest in his own order; there are several hundred diseases of which he is an heir. How often death marks the infant as soon as it opens its eyes—sometimes before. Death stalks about in every passing breeze; every pond and swamp is a charnel house, exuding deadly germs; the air and

the water are literally loaded with instruments of destruction. The mosquito stings him, and in so doing, injects a hypodermic of cholera, yellow fever, malaria and meningitis; the rat that gnaws into the granary and larder leaves behind bacilli of Black Plague, the same that once almost depopulated London. The filthy-footed house-fly goes from stable and garbage can to man's table, and on each foot he carries deadly germs, a sufficient number to inoculate a whole family with typhoid and tuberculosis, besides enough poison in his bite to infect every baby in town with infantile paralysis.

God has wisely endowed our physical bodies with marvelous powers of elimination, else the race would be wiped out by the many plagues of which we are subject. From cradle to grave man must fight, fight, fight—contagions without, and inoculations within; his pathway is one long battle-line, enemies, and more enemies—on the right and on the left, before and behind. When he slakes his thirst, bacilli enter his system that will bring on disease and death unless destroyed by antiseptics, or other germs, and eliminated from the body. As he walks along the shady path he must watch, lest he come in contact with a poisonous plant or vine, which will cover his body with burning, blistering inflammation.

Science is greatly helping in these many-sided battles; but all these inventions are born of necessity. The race has shambled along many weary centuries, not knowing the extent of the world's curse, not knowing either the kind or character of enemies the curse brought to him; but always clutching in the dark with mighty foes—in the march toward prog-

ress. When the most obstinate fight was neglected among any of the world's races, degeneracy, disease, and impotency were the inevitable results.

Again God has wisely endowed certain of His creatures to come to our rescue in the struggle with soil and vegetation. But for the hundreds of songsters, making music for us in the tree tops, garden and fruit growing would be next to impossible. And notwithstanding this fact, think of how man has wickedly slain these beautiful helpers in order to gratify a depraved passion for ornament. Birds are man's most efficient helpers, but he kills them just the same. God also commissioned the ugly toad to be man's support against bugs and insects. Snakes will destroy rats and field-mice to the extent that our crops would almost be destroyed if they did not serve us. These are just some little silver linings in the dark cloud.

We wish to notice, lastly, how man must suffer from warring elements ; he must fortify from season to season, changing the fortifications all the time. The summer is a necessity—yet he swelters almost beyond endurance ; sunstrokes occur daily in the heated season, besides bringing all manner of fevers. Then in winter the opposite obtains—he shivers through several months. In conclusion, we find little to remind us that this earth was once a paradise, where man walked free from “sickness, pain, and death.” The curse is in evidence everywhere. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain ;” but, thank God, a time is coming, where there will be no more curse. Amen !

XIV

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things.”—*Acts iii. 20-21.*

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write : for these words are true and faithful.”—*Rev. xxi. 5.*

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”—*Dan. vii. 13-14.*

THE golden dreams of our childhood, some of them, were darkened by the tragic conception we had of the “end of the world.” The thought that God was going to burn up this world some time possessed us from earliest recollection. It was fastened upon the childish imagination with a most tragic and dreadful apprehension. Once when the prairie was on fire, some miles away, looming against the dark sky, we ran screaming to mother’s arms, with the terrible news that the “world was burning up.” This delusion, which hung over us like a nightmare, is still believed by the unlearned

and superstitious. But all the observations of nature, and all scientific discoveries, teach us that God is a most rigid economist. All about us are His laboratories, smelters, refrigerators, dry houses, kilns of all kinds ; so that He gathers up, transfers, dissolves, changes, and utilizes every particle of matter, whether smoke, ashes, leaves, bones, or gases. Nothing is lost—nothing is destroyed.

That God will destroy this world—in any manner—is unreasonable, unscientific, and unscriptural ; He is not going to let it shamble on in wreck and sin, giving up at last that Satan has won the victory. But He is going to restore it to its former beauty and glory ; make it as it was in the beginning—a Garden—a Paradise. Why is the earth not a paradise to-day ? Oh, there are glimpses here and there, now and then a spot, reminding us of paradisaical restoration ; but it is like patches of blue, seen for a moment, on a stormy day. But why is it the earth generally reveals its worn, ragged, depleted, and impoverished condition ? As we have learned : *it was cursed because of sin !*

In a previous chapter we found the curse to be threefold : the ground, the animal kingdom, and man. We must keep in mind that the restitution, or restoration, must cover all the effects of the curse, else it would not be “the restitution of all things.” A restatement of some things already discussed is fundamental in this proposition. Sin has brought about all the blight and suffering of this earth ; sin has an Author, therefore the Author of sin must be eliminated from the scene as a necessary, inevitable beginning of the work of restoration. He is the “god

of this world " ; he seeks whom he may devour ; he will be hurled from his throne, and chained in the bottomless pit, and will deceive the nations no more. This Author of war, earthquakes, pestilences, famine, feuds, litigation, social disorder, and all evil will be cast out for a period of one thousand years, says the Word. In all the past millenniums he has lured, trapped, accused, blinded, and damned the race ; his slimy coils have encircled every home and institution. So the elimination of Satan will be a long step in the process of restoration.

Then again, over against the dominion of Satan will be the personal reign—as King of kings, and Lord of lords—the Man of Galilee—the Lord Christ. There will be a merging of the Church into a theocratic kingdom ; each one will be conducted and promoted in the interest of the other. If the kingdoms of this world are to be His, then government will be a theocracy, of which the one in the beginning was but a vague shadow ; it will be completed, both extensive and intensive. The throne of David, used in the Scriptures here as a type, will be reëstablished. In this government we shall have the wisdom of Solomon, the kindly reign of Louis IX, the beneficent administration of Alfred the Great, the moral influence of Queen Victoria, the intellectual régime of Elizabeth, and a holy imperialism, wider and more dominating than the cruel imperialism of Rome. All these phases of rulership—earth's greatest examples—are, when compared with That Day, as moonbeams to the glorious rays of the midday sun.

By way of illustration, let us notice the story of a little city. The principal industries were mines and

machine shops ; a dozen saloons were doing business at all the strategic corners. The people were ignorant, schools neglected and churches overshadowed and poorly conducted ; the city officers were in league with the vicious and criminal element. The saloons and bad officers dominated the town ; poverty, suffering, fights, brawls, murders, and divorces were always in evidence. A messenger of God came to the town, pitched a large tent, and for a month bombarded the fortresses of sin. The place was revolutionized : new officers were elected, saloons voted out, schools and churches revived. Husbands and sons saved their earnings, and came home sober at night. The people bought homes and began to plant flowers in the yards ; furniture and luxuries, such as carpets, pianos and pictures, were added. God was honored ; children, well dressed and clean, attended public school and the services at the church on Sunday. What was it ? A miniature millennium had come to that little city.

Thus will it be all over our great earth : no Devil, no evil systems, such as trusts, liquor traffic, white slavery, child labor, corrupt politics, immoral society, false religions, etc. "He will judge the world in righteousness and equity."

As we have learned before, the Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet will also be ousted from the affairs of earth : one representing bad government, the other, false religions. Through the personal reign of our Lord and His saints, conjointly, every nook and corner will be governed and obeyed, directly from His throne at Jerusalem. His power, wisdom, and authority will be delegated to His ruling saints. Yes, thank God, the righteous shall inherit the earth ;

then we shall be heirs and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ: sit with Him, as it were, on His throne, as He promised we should. "I beheld the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. vii. 21, 22, 27).

"And I saw thrones and they that sat on them, and judgment was given unto them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4). He also saw the souls who had escaped the tyranny of the Antichrist during the Tribulation, and refused his mark, and were martyred—they lived again. Satan to-day is the god of this world; but the time is coming when a voice will be heard like the voice of many waters and thunders: "It is enough—thus far and no farther." The long night of man's oppression and misrule will end; the widow's wail and the orphan's hopeless sob will be a jarring discord no more.

The restitution of all things—which means restoration—will next be manifested on the *ground*. The work of science and skill have, by constant application, rejuvenated the earth in many places; education and sanitation have begun, in a very limited way, the work that will be completed in That Day. The old worn-out hills, the thorn patches, the swamps,

the places of infection, the air full of contagion—caused by insects and deadly germs—will be renovated, and filled with God's pure oxygen. "For we shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (Isa. lv. 12-13). "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes" (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2, 6, 7).

The restitution cannot mean anything unless Edenic conditions are established, and that is exactly what we are taught to expect; the earth will once more be arrayed in fertility and beauty, as well as abundance; famine and pestilence will walk up and down in our land no more forever.

The curse will be lifted also from the animal kingdom; we have noticed how wild, cruel and savage are the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. Just what the creatures were before sin entered the moral world they will be in That Day; peace and harmony

will prevail among them. They will no longer regard man as an enemy and flee from him, or seek to tear him to pieces, but their attitude toward him will be gentleness and submission. The lamb and the lion will lie down together ; the lion will no longer crave blood, but will eat grass as an ox ; the child will play at the den of a serpent, without fear of its poisonous fangs ; the hawk and the dove will roost on the same limb. All this sounds like a dream, or fairy tale ; but such a condition must obtain, or else the restitution will be incomplete, and the Bible says it will be to the full extent of what was lost. "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there" (Isa. xxxv. 9). "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw as an ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of an asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 6-9). Who can read such a vision without praising God for what He has in store for us ? The curse shall be lifted from the animal kingdom, and a blessed peace will abide forever.

Then the Millennium will manifest itself in still another very remarkable way ; it is the thing we have long prayed and sighed for : *the reign of universal peace among men*. The whole world will be like one

large, happy family : racial, social, religious, and financial differences will be set aside indeed. Blessed communion will abound ; life will be prolonged with such environment—and naturally so—until death will be scarcely known. The Word teaches that life will be lengthened to such a degree that a man dying at the age of one hundred years will be considered a child. “ And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people : the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days : for the child shall die an hundred years old ; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed ” (Isa. lxv. 19, 20). What a picture of life ! What wonderful fountains of joy will spring up—no more weeping ! The undertaker will be scarcely known in that glad, glorious day. And it will not be in heaven ; it will be here ; living actually as we are to-day, but under conditions that will be Edenic and sublime. Notice another reference in the above prophecy : “ The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” Do we see the significance of this statement ? The religious status will be such that a man, living for a hundred years during the Millennium who does not become a Christian, will be an object of contempt—he will be a disgrace to the community. There is no such stigma these days, but rather, in some quarters, the stigma is in trying to be a Christian—this is really true when one seeks to be a New Testament Christian.

There will be two other religious features of That Day which should not be overlooked. First, it will

be a time of such spiritual power, with all the obstacles removed, that a nation will be born in a day ; all will know Him, from the least to the greatest. Hear this prophecy : “ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more ” (Jer. xxxi. 34). Yet men will be still free agents, and can reject the Gospel, just as they do now ; salvation is always a thing of choice—there is no such teaching as unconditional salvation. Strange as it may seem, many perhaps will refuse to be saved in the Millennium. Remember Satan will have a following when he is loosed.

Second, the stigma will be removed from some words and experiences which, to-day, are much ridiculed by scoffers. Holiness in the Church of Jesus Christ, which He purchased with His own blood, is like a red rag in the face of the infuriated bull ; the word is actually hated. Some way, sin has so blinded and veiled the souls of men that Holiness is a synonym for ignorance and fanaticism. This order is going to be radically changed—gloriously changed ; it will be blazoned on the streets in That Day, as the electric signs swing out from the business houses ; “ Holiness unto the Lord ” will not be a morsel at which the irreligious and worldly will mock ; the experience will be sought and obtained without fear of intimidation. Hear what the prophet has to say about Holiness, as he was allowed to behold the glories of the Millennium. “ In that day, shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS

UNTO THE LORD ; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts " (Zech. xiv. 20-21). Thank God for the coming glorious reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

“ The kingdom is coming, oh, tell ye the story,
God's banner exalted shall be ;
The earth shall be full of the knowledge and glory,
As waters that cover the sea.”

XV

THE FINAL CONSUMMATION

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.”—*Rev. xx. 7, 8.*

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away.”—*Rev. xx. 11.*

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.”—*Rev. xxi. 1.*

“Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.”—*Rev. xxi. 3, 4.*

BEFORE we drop the curtain on the great plan of the ages a final word is necessary that the whole sweep of things to come may be clearly before us. The Millennium Age will close by the loosing of Satan from his imprisonment. Just here we propose to tread softly, and keep within the things that are revealed : a great, wide, boundless, unexplored, glorious continent is opened up to our vision ; we stand in awe before it. It can be seen about as we behold the landscape—mountains, valleys, and rivers—from a coach window of a flying train ; it is visible, real, but indistinct. All that the

kinetoscope of revelation has given us, so far, are the things of time ; we are now about to catch some foregleams of eternity, or rather the scenes that are to usher in eternity.

A thousand years of peace, happiness, and glory ; the world basking under the iridescent splendor of Him who is the Sun of Righteousness—the Lily of the Valley ; a thousand years, when the Wicked One will cease from troubling, when joy and gladness were obtained, and sorrow and sighing will have flown away. Then a most remarkable thing will occur : Satan free ! and back at his old task—deceiving the nations—and he will succeed, as he does to-day. Notwithstanding a thousand years without Satanic intrigue, when he again appears on the scene he gains at once a tremendous following : “like the sands of the sea.” Does this seem to be unreasonable—impossible ? Yes, but for the *freedom of the will*, the power and subtlety of the fallen Lucifer, it would be impossible—unthinkable. However, he rallies his forces ; he mobilizes them for a last great conflict.

Another Battle of Waterloo is staged : the first Armageddon was the Waterloo, so far as the supremacy of earth is concerned ; this one will be the final Armageddon of things mortal ; this one will seal the doom forever of God’s enemies. When the battalions of the lost cause swing into line, headed by Satan himself, it will be his last stroke ; his long tragic career will end. The fire of God’s wrath will sweep him, his cohorts, and his earthly followers from the field. What then ? The Trinity of Evils—the Devil, the Beast (Antichrist), and the False Prophet—will be cast into the “lake that burneth

with fire and brimstone." That is, this will be done immediately following the Last Judgment, which is called as soon as the smoke of battle is cleared away.

These tremendous happenings were revealed to the Seer of Patmos in chronological order. As soon as God's fire destroys the Agencies of Evil, the Great White Throne sweeps into view, and the Last Judgment is called ; all the nations are assembled : saints and sinners of all ages, the Devil and his angels, and the angels who kept "their first estate," also will be in this final assize—standing before the White Throne. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 12-15).

Observe, the casting of the Trinity of Evils into the Lake of Fire does not occur until after the Judgment ; this gathering will be for the purpose of examining of records—the works of every man will be revealed, and the man himself. The Last Judgment will do three things in the presence of an assembled universe : First, all facts concerning God, His administration, and His character will be fully revealed. He will exonerate His character, that all may know—nothing will be hid. His throne from

the dawn of creation to That Day is untarnished, and men, devils, and angels will see and acknowledge this truth. Second, the Last Judgment will be for the purpose of showing men up in their true character ; this cannot be done until all intelligent beings are present. The man who faces his eternal doom will be forced to shout Amen to the eternal justice of God ; He will be glorified in all He does. It will be a day of impartial justice ; human character is cunning and deceitful ; but then each—each demon, each angel—will stand out in the bold lime-light of God's dazzling throne. Oh, that tremendous Last Judgment ! It is far in the future—beyond the Millennium ; but those who die in sin to-day will remain in darkness and chains, as it were, awaiting the Assize of God. Third, the Last Judgment will reward every man to his full measure, for not only the deeds done in the body, but for the effect his life has had on the world ; currents of weal or woe flow out from even the humblest life ; all such influence will be brought out into the light. “For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. xii. 14). “And before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” “Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” “And these shall go

away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 32-34, 41, 46).

Now this decree, delivered to the impenitent and unsaved, is called the Second Death ; when the soul leaves the body it is the First Death ; when the soul leaves the presence of God, leaving all life, all hope, and all that is blessed, it is the Second Death. Turning to Revelation xxi. 8, we find who it is that will die the Second Death. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death."

The Last Judgment is past—eternity is on—what then ? Let us see ! "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." "And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write : for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. xxi. 1, 2, 5). What can these wonderful words mean ? We wish to speak in a whisper—what can all these wonders and new glories mean ? It looks as if heaven and earth will be brought very near together ; the earth has had her baptism of fire ; the things which were in progress during the Millennium will be consummated in the eternal To-morrows. Who can tell but in that far-away period—it is not a far-away time ; time is then no more—who can tell but the earth will be, even for all eternity—the Home of the Soul—the faithful, blood-washed saints ? Does it not look as if the New Heaven will be very near the New Earth ?

God dwelling among His redeemed children? This cannot refer to Christ's Millennium reign; this is God, the Father; then we learned that in the Millennium there will be some death. In this eternal world "there shall be no more death" (Rev. xxi. 4). Surely it is that eternal NOW, when all probation is ended, and all the tests are over: destiny is fixed forever!

We are inclined to believe that this earth, which is to be purified by fire, and made glorious, will be the future home of God's holy people. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). Thanks be to God for the vision; thanks be to God for the glorious prospects. Turner, the world's greatest artist, according to Ruskin, was once showing one of his masterpieces to a friend, who was on very intimate relations with the great artist. He said, "Mr. Turner, I fail to see anything so wonderful about your picture." Whereupon the artist replied: "I am sorry for you that you do not." Thus we feel for those who are unable to see God's plan of the ages, and what it will mean to His very own in That Day. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"For I testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in the book: if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

PART III
An Addenda

THE WAY

"I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to the left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware :
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as struggling there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news —
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with
her crews ;
And the stars of the night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge : but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumults, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest."

—*Browning's Saul.*

I

IS PREMILLENNIALISM PESSIMISTIC?

THE Church was left on earth to represent Christ ; to take up the work He began. Its business is to sow the seed of the kingdom and to establish righteousness in the hearts of men through the impartation of the Holy Ghost. It is to take light where there is darkness, harmony where there is discord, hope where there is despair. The kingdom of God means, when established, that God's will is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

The process of doing this thing has been in operation for nearly two thousand years, and yet, what can even a casual observer see for the realization of this wonderful vision? The Church is striving to-day as never before ; she is investing largely, but each year the returns seem to be continually falling below the hopes of the most optimistic. Now what is the situation? What do we mean by the terms *premillennialism and postmillennialism*? What is the relation between the interpretation of the one or the other to the world-wide conquest for human redemption?

If postmillennialism is true, the present gospel propaganda is to do the work of preparing the world for the vision of Isaiah xxxv. ; when the whole earth shall be wrapt in a glorious reign of righteousness

and peace. All that is cruel and mean shall be eliminated, and Christ (or rather the Christ spirit) shall reign supremely in all society. This interpretation says that He has already come, all He will come, until the final judgment, and we are bringing the world to the feet of Him who died for its redemption. This is a big proposition stated *multum in parvo*.

Premillennialism takes just the opposite view of the situation. It fails to see wherein the Word holds out any such a promise, but, on the other hand, positively says that no such results will come from the preaching of the Gospel. It shall be preached in all the world, "as a witness," but not as an agency that will save all. This is being done; the whole world will *hear*, but we all know that sin, lawlessness, unbelief, Sabbath desecration, empty churches, worldliness, sordid covetousness, and social impurity flaunt themselves with unblushing audacity in the face of God's Church, in the places where the Church should have the greatest influence. They see the world growing worse and worse, as the Bible so clearly states; that social wreck and spiritual darkness will cover the earth, on and on, unabated, until Jesus Himself shall come and take the government of this earth on His own shoulders. The Master held out no hope for the gospel triumph over the affairs of this world. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." Nothing is more clearly taught than that Christ and His apostles saw an apostasy coming.

Every true pastor knows that it is a fight requiring all the strength of body and mind, soul and spirit, to hold the ground already occupied; advancement is

scarcely thought of. Great plans, big conventions, able speeches, forward movements are launched, machinery is added to machinery, new boards and secretaryships are created, flooding the Church with literature; but the pastors who are down in the trenches, as it were, know little or no strength has been added. The same hard pull is on, if finances are met, and obligations discharged. Crime, insanity, marital relations ignored, and all kindred evils are fearfully on the increase. Premillennial expositors see all this in perfect harmony with the teachings of the Bible; they are not alarmed at the times prevailing, which will cause men's hearts to fail for fear. "Perilous times" coming in any form only confirm the theory.

Every earthquake "in divers places"; every strike, bringing thousands of workmen and their families to want and suffering; every war-cloud, sending a soul-sickening reverberation around the world; every great combination, seeking to corner the foodstuffs away from the hungry millions; every effort of Church and State to put the premium on man, and the works of man, defying humanism, rather than the spiritual and immortal; all these are but so many cogs in the wheel of "Thus saith the Lord."

But wherein is the question as suggested by the caption of this article? Popular preachers and writers see none of these things in their true perspective. Such a somber view is the result of a bad liver, a morbid imagination, or a distorted vision. Hear them: "We are getting ready to get ready, to get ready, to get ready, to do some wonderful things. Just wait a moment and see what the old Gospel is

going to do. Christ is going to triumph." Oh, yes, He is; we are as sure of that as we are that He walked upon the shores of Galilee. But He is going to triumph in the way He said He would, and not in the way of a sin-loving, blood-rejecting generation such as rides the crest of the waves in Church and State to-day.

Popular churchianity does not relish the doctrine of our Lord's return. We often wonder why; what could be objectionable to the Bride talking and longing for the coming of the Bridegroom? If she is ready, no greater joy than to feel that soon He will come for His very own. It is the false sweetheart who trembles at the mention of a returned lover. Preaching the early expectation of His return strikes at the root of present-day religiosity. If the world is to be saved by the Church in its present operation, and the process must continue on indefinitely to this end (just what they try to believe), the doctrine of His coming is an offense, an insult to the Gospel, and a reflection on the work of the Holy Ghost, so they say.

But those who have much to say on this great theme find hundreds of direct statements in almost every book of the Bible; and it has a ring of divine sanction. Then it means an open rebuke to the popular ideas and methods. Dead, backslidden churches do not want to hear that at any hour He may open the skies with ten thousand angels, like lightning from the east unto the west, and a shout as loud as Gabriel's trumpet. Far better is a comforting, optimistic message on Sunday morning about "The Hague Peace Conference," "The Ecumenical Con-

ference of Methodism," or "Congress of Religions." A sermon on the movement to harmonize all religions—Jews, Catholics, Mohammedans, Protestants, Hindu Creeds, etc., etc.—would be greatly enjoyed. It is a fact that just such a movement is now on foot. Well, this sounds so much more hopeful, and puts a pastor in much better favor with the average up-to-date congregation than a burning message setting forth the darkness settling down upon us from every quarter; just what Christ saw, Paul saw, and all the rest saw.

We know some who utterly repudiate the so-called premillennial idea; but if you get near enough to hear their truer side speak (those who have a real heart in the work of salvation, and are not hirelings), they are whistling to keep up courage, but it is the whistle of the scared boy passing the graveyard. Yet those who take the Bible view of the situation are branded as "pessimists"; but is it not better to be a pessimist in line with the truth than an optimist, and feel the sands continually being washed out from under us? Away with an optimism that can be satisfied sheltering under a "refuge of lies"; better a thousand times be a green-eyed, pessimistic calamity howler, and be on the side of truth. The man or the set of men, the church or the churches who do not see the perfect harmony of all transpiring about us to-day and the teaching of God's Word, certainly have more prejudice than honest desire to see the truth. He who runs may read. *If believing and preaching a religious apostasy, a world filling up more and more with violence, human society wrecked by passion and lust, suffering and unrest to be universal,*

then Jesus Christ and Paul were the greatest pessimists this world has ever produced.

But to close ; we utterly deny the charge of pessimism as attached to believing this gracious truth. To us it is the rift in the dark clouds ; a beacon light in a midnight darkness ; a life-line thrown out over a stormy sea ; a golden sunbeam filtering down from the great god of day into a room filled with stench and squalor. Showing us that far away beyond the swamps and quagmires are yet the eternal hills of blue ; and all the strife and turmoil will soon end in glory and righteous power. "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose . . . the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it . . . and the excellency of our God. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not ; behold, your God cometh with vengeance." "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Thank God for the blessed, hopeful doctrine that the coming of Jesus Christ is premillennial and imminent, without which the present gloom would be an hundredfold darker.

II

IF I WERE A POSTMILLENNIALIST

THAT our readers may not be confused as to the teaching of postmillennialism, we will say that refers to the coming reign of Christ. The Millennium means a thousand years of time, wherein "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The *post* theory as over against the *pre* theory is that His coming is to be after the millennial period : post—after ; mill—thousand ; ennium—years. His coming after the thousand years, briefly and roughly analyzed.

The premillennium idea claims that no such reign will occur until He comes ; it will require His personal presence and power to bring about a universal, world-wide sway of peace and righteousness. It is charged against this interpretation that it dishonors the Gospel, the Church, the ministry, the Holy Ghost, and the heart of all necessary to stimulate faith. If we are fighting for a lost cause (the salvation of the world), why not quit ? so say our *post* friends. If we jump at conclusions, read the word superficially, or in the light of modern higher criticism, which humanizes and naturalizes the whole scheme of God and the universe, postmillennialism is reasonable and logical.

But if we approach the Book as inspired by the Spirit acting on the hearts of holy men, and depend upon that same Spirit to interpret His own truth, allow the Spirit free and full access to our heart, a new Book, a new revelation, a new faith will spring up spontaneously, and the wonder will be why it was not seen before. This writer had graduated at college, took a course at a theological seminary, preached several years, heard big preachers and little ones, educated and uneducated, deep and shallow, etc., but not one tangible fact concerning our Lord's return can we now recall as having received from any source. When it came, it was nothing less than a sunburst.

"Oh, but it does not require a great truth to impress a small brain-pan." And that is just the conceited opinion which some of the believers in all this new business, now going on in Church and theology, have of those who can see nothing but fuss and foam in the things we are crowing over. This writer is willing to be counted a back number, a croaker, a pessimist, or anything else "they" choose to call him; but just the same, the revelation of Christ's coming cleared my religious landscape like the sun dashing out from behind an April thunder-storm. But I was to tell on myself, in case I believed in the popular postmillennial gospel of the Chautauqua and University type.

First, the greater part of the Old Testament, especially the prophets, all of them, would have no meaning to me whatever. Yes, I repeat it. "Could you disbelieve the Bible?" No, but when I compare the language of those mighty visions with any-

thing, past, present, or in the probable future, there would be no connection. Nothing like the thirty-fifth of Isaiah, the second of Isaiah, or the "pruning-hook" and "plowshare" programme has ever been brought about, or even resembled, as yet. It is only a bunch of words, beautiful, of course.

Just here is where the Jews, in the days of Christ, made the most fatal of all their blunders. They were students of the Old Testament; it was full of certain wonderful promises. What were they? Every Jewish scholar, every Jewish home, were saturated with what was to occur when the Messiah came. Suffering, oppression, poverty, slavery, sorrow, and all else were to be ended. He was to put all rule and authority under His feet. "The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Certainly, they were disappointed and disgusted at the claims made by the Galilean; His humility, apparent weakness, conduct, egotism, and above all, His followers, bore not the most meager resemblance to what they had been promised through the centuries. What had they done? Read the prophecies concerning His Second Coming, His power and authority. They had overlooked the prophecies concerning His First Coming, it to be in lowliness and rejection by all the world.

Second, if I were a postmillennialist, I would be stumbling around in the same fog of Old Testament exegesis as were the scribes and Pharisees; the same problems and discrepancies which they could not rec-

oncile would be stumbling-blocks to me. But He has come with all power in heaven and earth ; did He not say so ? Did He not tell them they did not understand the Scriptures ? Yes, but He referred to His coming as it was then, despised and rejected of men. Our *post* brethren say He is conquering the world ; we are bringing in the kingdom. Are we ? Where does He rule and dominate on this earth, aside from a few humble, here and there ? Is it in society, filled with lust, deceit, envy, pride, and all other devilish passions ? Is it in politics, absolutely dominated by ambitious men, many of them devoid of patriotism, standing for nothing but salary and reëlection ? A large part of representation, both in state and nation, are mouthpieces of the liquor traffic, making laws to protect and fighting all legislation that hinders the bloody business. Is it in business—the commercial world ? Even the ambitious politicians know that an eternal warfare is on to keep the sordid, covetous, money-mad captains of industry from cornering and absorbing all the products, food and material, to enhance their merciless maw for gold. Why this high cost of living ? Why this fifty per cent. increase on all necessities in one decade ? Is it in his own church, where his influence and power dominate ? We will answer this by saying that the ruling spirits of society, business, and politics belong to the church. The cities have about one church to the thousand, on the average ; but pray what are they doing to regenerate any of the great forces and agencies of human society ? Almost nothing, and the whole world is beginning to see it.

Third, if I were a postmillennialist, I would be the

most discouraged human on earth. Every turn of the wheels, throughout the whole world, would add gloom and confusion to my troubled, disquieted spirit. We are all better clothed, better housed, and more intelligent than ever before. All science is laying itself out to relieve human suffering and ignorance. There is a restlessness, almost to fever-heat, felt and feared among men as never before. Things are happening daily which make our blood chill ; the physical earth itself seems to be under the same dreadful spell. Laboring under the delusion, as I would be, that "the parliament of man" is to learn war no more ; sorrow and sighing are to flee away ; the federation of the world is soon to be one great loving brotherhood. How could I be rational and give myself, with zeal and enthusiasm, to a situation so glaring and irrational as harmonizing the one with the other, and retain the self-respect of my better judgment? Not I. If the thing can be straightened out, here is one who stands ready and anxious to be led into the light. From every angle the world-wide problem becomes more and more complicated, so that a satisfactory explanation lies beyond the power of human ken.

Fourth, if I were a postmillennialist, the greatest sayings and sermons of our Lord would be a dead letter to me. When He depicts the things to come upon the earth "in the last days" (and He had more to say about those days than any other), like the prophecies, they would be a jumble of words. He once doubted if any faith would be found at all when He returned. He said it would be like the days of Noah : sin and unbelief would abound. All that He said about the righteous inheriting the earth, reigning

with Him, etc., could mean nothing. The entire book of Revelation would be a compilation of nonsense. He said this book was a revelation of Himself.

The great sayings, letters and warnings of Paul about the "last days," the "perilous times," the wolves not sparing the flock, the form of godliness, wicked men and seducers waxing worse and worse, could not be true if we are to get the world into a blaze of millennial glory as we go forward. If our *post* friends are correct, the Master and His greatest apostle were sadly mistaken, and their words would only deepen the darkness. I shall now sum up my difficulties by a last and fearful statement. What I am going to say is in the fear of God, and He knows my heart so well that He forgives me now for making it. Not until I had weighed this awful subject from every angle could I venture this extravagant conclusion.

Fifth, if I were a postmillennialist, not only would I be in a jumble of Old Testament and New Testament exegesis, reading as did the Jews 2,000 to 3,000 years ago ; not only would I be the most discouraged man on earth, getting no light or help from New Testament eschatology, more important to us than any other part of the Bible, but if I were a postmillennialist, *I would be an atheist and an infidel to-day.*

I know this sounds harsh and irreverent, but just as a great preacher once said : " Had I lived in France in the days of Voltaire, saw the church as he saw it, the mouthpiece of God, I would have believed as Voltaire." A whole book could be written to enlarge this last subhead, but I will only say that, if there were not some way besides the present religious

propaganda for bringing in the kingdom of God, I *could not believe in a scheme that has failed as this has and is certainly failing.*

But as a premillennialist, my heart leaps up with hope and assurance to a time when Satan shall be bound, Jesus will reign on this earth with His own, and truly, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

III

SCOFFERS

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.”—*2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.*

WE believe the above prophecy has no reference whatever to those outside the Church—the unsaved part of the world, and in touch with Christianity, but have rejected Christ. There are among the unregenerate scoffers, plenty of them, touching the ministry and religion in general; but this prophecy has to do with one specific phase of religion: the Lord's Return; and touching this doctrine, we know of no scoffers outside the Church—they are on the inside. In the Apostasy of the last days, of which this generation is a splendid example, there is to be such a blindness of God's truth that the blessed hope of His glorious appearing will be lost. Strange as it may seem, great Bible scholars and exegeses can spend a lifetime dealing in divine truth without seeing it—the most conspicuous doctrine of the New Testament. There is no truth that will stir the wrath and religious intolerance more than a sermon on the near coming of Jesus; it has an edge, and a rebuke, and an appeal in it that overwhelm the people, especially the lukewarm and backslidden.

By careful observation we find several classes of scoffers : all of them are in the Church, and officially ; all of them profess to love and follow Jesus. They are not confined to clergymen alone, but more of them than any other belong to that sacred order. Laymen who scoff at this doctrine do so because they have been under the influence of false teaching ; they are generally ready to hear and accept the Word when faithfully presented, unless they are fortified by prejudice. The mother of prejudice is ignorance and is manifested in many ways, and usually can be traced to wrong information. There is no part of the Scriptures, wrested, distorted, deceiving the people into grievous errors and damnable heresies, but that the blame can be truly located on a *spot* six by four feet—in the rear of the “sacred desk.”

The rejection of Jesus, when on earth, was brought about by the Church of that day—the religious teachers ; they who claimed to possess the Oracles of God blocked the way. Just the condition that obtained then has prevailed all through the life of the Church : religious teachers presume to hold a religious censor over the minds and consciences of their subjects. It must be approved by the Sanhedrin, or steps will be taken at once to throttle it ; the people shall have what the ecclesiastical bosses do not favor. To-day universities and “authorities” must approve before the man or his message can be allowed free course. It was this religious imperialism that put the Son of God on the cross. Sixty-eight millions of men, women and children have been martyred since Jesus came to plant in the human heart love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness—and

their martyrdom was executed by order of the Church. The Church has truly been called the world's greatest murderer. How can such a monstrous travesty be applied to the Church, which our Lord purchased with His own blood? It is the Church, but it is not *the Church*—the ecclesia—it is the spirit of intolerance and priestly hate, which have ever fastened themselves into the vitals of the Church, and, like a vampire, have drawn life blood from its veins.

Yes, there are scoffers in these days concerning His coming, and they belong to the Church—the Bride of Christ, or they think they do, and should be the ones who are looking for the glorious appearing. The first class to which we call attention is the ignorant scoffer. If preachers, their religious thinking has been only on the surface of things. When facts concerning this doctrine are heard, they are swept aside as vagaries, and no effort is ever put forth to become informed, either by a study of the Word, or the reading of books by those who have thought out to some conclusions. Preachers usually enter their work not open to convictions on many lines, but with certain fixed notions of their duty and the work of the Church; they are loath to “take on” any new or strange ideas; they are dreadfully afraid of strange fire. Their attitude to the Second Coming of Christ is about as reasonable as the ignorance and prejudice felt by the rabble toward preachers and religious people. Just as it is difficult to reach and overcome ignorant prejudices of the vicious poor with the Gospel, so it is to make headway with the ignorant scoffer.

Then we find the educated scoffers ; those who have the college and university stamp on what they know. The doctrine of the premillennial coming of Jesus presupposes that the present order of things has failed ; it interprets all this dazzle and show of modernism as emptiness and veneer. One who has great intellectual and social culture—be he clergyman or layman—investing the results of great learning and research on the Church and religiosity, sees himself doing the big things, or sees himself a part of a great, workable, successful, efficient scheme. Any doctrine or gospel that discounts the impact of such an accumulation of gray matter is a reflection too serious to be passed over. “It discredits the Church and ministry,” one often hears. To be sure. There you find the animus of the whole question. The educated scoffer of the Second Coming of Jesus has two horns to his dilemma : if he subscribes to it—the premillennial idea—it dreadfully discounts the big ideas, big “movements,” etc., of which he is a part. If he rejects it as a whole, it makes him consistent with himself ; consistent with the lines of least resistance ; consistent with the popular notions and ideals of the day. To be so, it is necessary to repudiate the whole thing under the cover of its being a reflection upon the Gospel and the *dispensation of the Holy Ghost* ! Think of it ; tremendous argument !

Still another class are the backslidden scoffers : preachers and people who have lost the vision of God, and thereby the deeper things of His truth. The Word and the Spirit work always in harmony ; no one can interpret the Word who has not the Holy Spirit upon his soul, in unctuous illumination. All

who were once saved and refuse to walk in the light are sure to be enshrouded in a darkness so impenetrable that the fundamental things of salvation become sealed to them. The Jewish Church—prior to the First Coming of Jesus—was a backslidden ecclesiastical system, and had certain well-defined notions as to how their Messiah was to come, and what He would do. How few in that day were looking for Him in such a way as to know and receive Him when He did come. He appeared, not as they expected; He did nothing that their Messiah was to do; hence, they rejected Him, and hated Him with a cruel, murderous hatred, and also those who believed Him to be the Messiah. The backslidden of to-day are hopelessly blind to this “Blessed Hope.” The bride who has been untrue to her absent husband does not look or long for his return, and will not want him when he does come; he breaks into her plans and pleasures; so does the coming of Jesus break into the pleasure-mad scoffers. The backslidden Church can ease its conscience so easily by saying, “Where is the sign of His coming?” etc. They see no buds of the fig tree; the times are not pregnant with impending events to them; the future has a rose-morn promise in the present order of things. They have no vision.

We wish to notice another class, which cannot be identified as ignorant, uneducated or backslidden; they may be educated and progressive, but knowing nothing of this truth, refuse to see. They are the stubborn scoffers. If they should subscribe to a doctrine of which they were not the discoverers or promoters, it would demote them from religious leader-

ship in intellectualism. See? This class might rightly be named envious scoffers; they do not wish to yield to teaching which is new—to them! They do not relish seeing others come into light and truth of which they are ignorant. “Teachers in Israel!” It is the same old conceit and arrogance which characterized the scribes and Pharisees in the long ago. They will hear no teaching from those who are below them in knowledge. Beyond a doubt, a spirit of envy and jealousy possesses the souls of many who refuse to accept this doctrine, and scoff at our Lord’s Return. “In the last days” there shall be scoffers, and there are many to-day. What is it? Fulfilled prophecy!

IV

SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

AS a closing for this discussion, we feel that a few words on the line of *objections* will be timely. It shall not be our aim to enter this field of differences of opinion at any length, but we will notice some of the arguments of the postmillennialists, which are most frequently set forth by them. The whole trend of God's Word is so overwhelmingly on the side of premillennialism that controversy seems to be one-sided to such a degree that an elaborate rejoinder is so much loss of time, both to the writer and reader. However, that it may be known we are not unmindful of their objections, and some that may arise in the minds of the unprejudiced, we will notice a few of the strongest.

First, the early expectancy of His coming, and watching thereunto—they say that we say—is a test of our loyalty and fidelity. Our *post* brethren vigorously declare that such is not a test at all; the true test is our loyalty and fidelity, without knowing when or how He will return—one year, or one thousand years. If a wife is true to her husband just because he is expected to return on an early train, her fidelity is false. If she is true to him she will be just as faithful to him if he is not expected for a year, or not knowing when he will come. If this proposition were the attitude of the premillennialists, the point is well

taken, but the premise is wrong. We claim that a test—or the highest test—is a yearning love for His appearing, and not faithful because He might come soon. Nowhere in premillennial literature do we find the appeal for fidelity based on an early expectancy of His coming. The early expectancy does not affect the fidelity of the wife for the returning husband; but it is a powerful incentive and appeal for her to get her house in order and prepare for his reception. If he is not expected for a month or year, she may be loyal and faithful, but some things will remain undone or postponed in view of his delay. It is not a test of our fidelity to Jesus that we look for His appearing, but it doubles our diligence and zeal to be ready—"with lamps trimmed and burning."

Second, premillennialism materializes the Word of God, puts physical constructions on teaching that is purely spiritual. For example: "Kingdom," "Reign," "Rule," "Inherit," "Throne," "Possess," "The earth, etc." They claim these Scriptures must be spiritually interpreted, and when they are not, the Bible is humanized. "The kingdom is within," therefore, spiritual. The "reign" is having dominion over our wills and affections; and in that sense Christ does reign, and men and women reign, and they reign *now*. By and by Christ will dominate and possess all the world—then His reign will be absolute; the saved people will be so in the ascendancy that they will truly reign with Christ here on earth. The kingdoms of this world will be managed by Christ-possessed men and women; then the kingdom will belong to God and His Christ.

As we have seen from the discussion in these chapters—and from the Word—the powers of darkness and sin are steadily increasing. The dark pictures in the future, so far as this Gospel Age is concerned, are drawn by the Master Himself, and His apostles. They saw no such triumph of righteousness as our postmillennial friends are seeing ; but, on the other hand, they saw this age winding up in fearful catastrophes—and those dreadful happenings were to be the heralds of His coming—and He will “come in like manner” as He went. Those who saw Him then were living men—not spirits. To spiritualize all the teachings of the end of this Gospel Age is to throw the Bible into a jumble of nonsense. We can just as reasonably spiritualize the prophecies of His First Coming and say He was not on the earth as a Man, but as a divine influence ; and some actually take that view of it. The prophecies of His coming reign on the earth in the Last Days are just as explicit as those of His Incarnation, life, death, and suffering—except there are at least fifty times as many Scriptures about His Second Coming. The Bible must be consistent with itself ; we have no authority to wrest, pervert, change, and explain away the plain statements—just to fit a preconceived theory. If we must spiritualize the things spoken in the Old Testament and the New concerning the events of the Last Days, we have no authority to spiritualize any part of the Book. No part is more explicit than what it says shall take place here on earth—if language can have any meaning. Examined in the light of the whole Bible, surely the teachings of pre-millennialism cannot be in error. The Bible is full

of literal teachings, and we must not spiritualize the Scriptures which have more suggestion of the literal than those we know to be literal.

A third objection : How can Jesus, with a post-resurrection body—a glorified body—and His saints, with their post-resurrection bodies, live, associate, operate, and rule over living men and women who are flesh and blood ? It is understood that the saints who have a part in the first resurrection are the ones He will bring with Him, and they will rule with Him as joint heirs of His kingdom. How can immortal and heavenly bodies administer on an earthly throne over the things of time and sense ? Such a mixture contradicts all reason ; besides it is an absurdity ! It degrades our conception of the Son of God, and brings Him down to a base, materialistic plane, which puts our Bible on a level with Greek mythology : the gods were mixed up with earthly affairs, having human passions, and sought the solution of human problems.

Again, we say, the point is well taken ; and our reply will be briefer than the statement of the objection. It is recorded of the Master that He appeared among His disciples—ate with them, and entered into all their troubles—just as He did before the crucifixion. He did those things with the same body He has *to-day* : it is His glorious, resurrected body ; He made them handle Him, and to them He was just the same. He showed them that He was not a spirit, but a body. *If He could do it then*—why can He not do it again ? If He could speak, act, and enter into all the minor things of His humble followers on the shores of Galilee—and do it with a glorified body—

could not He cause His saints to do likewise? He will be during His millennial reign just what He was between the resurrection and ascension. The Bible plainly says what He will do, and how : then to explain it away as impossible and absurd we must do away with what He did during the forty days. No one can understand the mysteries of a resurrected body : its powers, its capacities, etc. But when the *ipsi dixit* of God says it shall be so, the argument is ended. No human on earth can explain how the Holy Ghost can enter a body of flesh and blood, pardon, cleanse, and abide there ; but He does—and we know it, thank God. Notice : to those who have never experienced the incoming of the Holy Ghost, the idea is preposterous, unreasonable, unscientific, and *absurd*. Exactly ! “Great is the mystery of godliness.”

A fourth objection. The premillennial reign, claiming, as it does, such a glorious administration of peace and righteousness, will give to the peoples of that age an incomparable advantage over those of us who live to-day. We must literally wrestle with “principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world” ; we must fight hand to hand with the Devil continually. The *curse* is within and without ; the blight of Satanic power is on everything ; so few can stem the flood-tide of Devil rule to-day. Just as the pull is against all that is good and holy now, in That Day the pull will be just in the opposite direction—toward God. It is hard now to be religious ; then it will be easy. Our *post* brethren see in this situation—partiality.

We confess this view-point may be emphasized

until the truth of it would seem apparent and reasonable. But the facts must be examined as a whole, and not separately. There will be no more power of grace in the Millennium than operates in this age, and men will be just as free to sin then as now. The environment will be changed, but the power of volition will be unchanged. In this connection it will be remembered that, at the close of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed for a season; and that loosing will be to place the test again to those who have seen and felt none of the Satanic power; it will be a sifting, as men will then have to choose between Christ and Satan just as they do now. Life will be so prolonged that the majority of those who are born in the Millennial Age will be alive and will meet the Tempter. In some measure this will equalize the supposed partiality.

The situation, however, will be entirely equalized when we remember the greater honors and rewards for those of us who are "overcomers" here in this devil-ridden world; it will be easier then, but the greater rewards will more than balance the difference. The battle now is a thousand times more severe, but the victory and its prizes then will be perhaps ten thousand fold greater. Some contend that the premillennial idea teaches a second probation. We shall not occupy time or space to reply; this heresy belongs to the Russell propaganda, and is as misleading as it is dangerous and unscriptural. No standard writers on our Lord's Return advocate this doctrine; the wicked dead of this age, or the Millennial Age, will find only the Last Judgment awaiting them.

But still another objection is raised : premillennialism dishonors the Holy Ghost ; He has failed, and Christ must return to complete the work that should have been accomplished in the Gospel Age through the agency of the Holy Ghost. If we hold to the theory that the mission of the Gospel is to redeem the world—leaven society and qualify the race for heaven—then their contention is true. But the Word is so explicit as to the mission of the Gospel and the Holy Ghost and what will be accomplished, that no argument or refutation should be necessary. The Holy Ghost is doing exactly what the Master said He would do : “call out a people for His name’s sake.” The Ecclesia is a called-out company, and the Spirit is doing that to-day : getting a people ready for the Bridehood of the Lamb. Men rejected God in His dispensation ; they rejected Christ in His, and exactly in the same manner are they rejecting the Holy Ghost. He is being dishonored just as the Master was dishonored in His day. If premillennial doctrine dishonors the Holy Ghost, the crowning words of this dishonor were spoken by the Master Himself. Remember His words : “Broad way,” and *many* ; “Narrow way,” and *few*. Thank God for the revelation this great truth brings to the Word ; it clears up every page of holy prophecy, and fills the believer with the “Blessed Hope.”



